

G R E A T  
A N D  
P R E C I O U S  
P R O M I S E S,

O R,

Some Sermons concerning the  
Promises, and the right  
application thereof:

Whereunto are added some  
other concerning the usefulness of  
Faith in advancing Sanctification.

As also, three more concerning the  
Faith of Assurance.

---

By Mr. *A N D R E W G R A Y*, late  
Minister of the Gospel in *Glasgow*.

---

All being revised since his death  
by some friends.

The last Impression carefully  
corrected and amended.

---

2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore these  
promises (dearly beloved) let us  
cleanse our selves from all filthinesse  
of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting ho-  
linesse in the fear of God.*

---

*Edinburgh*, Printed by *George Swintoun*  
and *James Glen*, Anno Dom. 1669.

---

OF THE

AND

PROCEEDINGS

IN

OF

THE

AND

OF

THE

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF





## To the Reader.

Christian Reader,



Although (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been kept back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Presse from other things: yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth as soon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and gave the Reader such advertisements as we conceived necessary, concerning the one as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present, but to put this little Piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose; Only, we find some help is offered unto thee, in three most weighty and concerning points of Christian Religion, 1. How by the  
A 2 lively

## To the Reader.

*lively exercise of faith; thou may apply the great and precious Promises. 2. How by faith thou may advance the work of Sanctification. And 3. How thy faith may grow up unto Assurance. Of all which we may truly say, that nothing can more seasonably take up the thoughts nor bring more advantage to the souls of the Lords people in these times.*

*O how necessary is it in such troublesome days, to learn, how through Faith and Patience, we may inherit the Promises: and now when our strong corruption (hath in a manner necessitate the wise Physician to mix unto us so bitter a cup, and give so strong a potion, in what a fainting and swooning condition must we be, if by the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we receive not also the strong consolation.*

*Again, when profanity and ungodlinesse hath so abounded in these Nations, that from the top of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundnesse, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores: And when the corruptions of the Time like the sons of Zerviah, are grown too strong, even for the Davids who are amongst us; What should we study with more earnestnesse, then to purifie our hearts by faith, and by having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holinesse in the fear of the Lord?*

*3. When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even forget prosperity, and the multiplied changes and*

## To the Reader.

revolutions in our days, hath so clearly demonstrate the instability of all sublunary glory, and so convincingly taught us, that this is not our rest; Undoubtedly, it is time to look for a city that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. The subject then is useful.

As to the manner of handling it: It is true; much accuracy and neatnesse, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleanings of a Church Writer; And as to liveliness and power, though it be as easie to draw a picture with the heat and motion of a living man, as to Write or Print, these lively motions of the Spirit which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in Preaching, and in an eminent measure were also let out upon this blessed Author, yet we suppose thou wilt find, the matter most seriously and feelingly Spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, and therefore spake: Yea, both conceptions and expressions savouring much of an exercised Spirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it self, but even thirsting also, and panting for the salvation of others; nay (in some measure) travelling in birth, till Christ might be formed in them. Oh, that more of this holy zeal and fervency, might accompany this great measure of light and knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel that the Lord hath graciously bestowed both on Pastors and People in this generation, that once again we might see, (as in the dayes of John Baptist) the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, and the

To the Reader.

violent take it by force. And that the blessed Spirit by the same gracious operations, may so warm and enlarge thy soul in the use of this and all other means for thy eternal Salvation, is, and shall be the sincere desires of

Thy servants for  
Christs sake,

Robert Traill.

28 Oct. 62

John Stirling.

---

Great

bles.  
may  
this  
tion,

For



# Great and precious Promises.

## SERMON I.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**M**ay we not truly say, that if ever the Christians who live in those dayes shall be advanced to stand within the holy place, and shall inherit everlasting life, all these are now before his Throne may lay aside their harps and give us leave to sing? Will it not be a mysterie, suppose ye, unto heavenly Enoch that spent so much of his time in communion and fellowship with God, when he shall behold such Christians within that everlasting rest, that have spent so little of their time in corresponding with God? Will

eat

## 2 Great and precious Promises.

it not be a mystery unto believing *Abraham*, when he shall behold such misbelievers, such disputers of the promises of God, advanced to reign with Christ? Will it not be a mystery unto wrestling *Jacob*, when he shall behold these Christians once crowned with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Princes to wrestle with God, till they did prevail: Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shall behold such impatient Christians as we have been, entering into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when he shall behold such unmortified Christians entering within that City, into which no unclean thing doth enter? Will it not be a mystery unto tender *Josiah*, to behold such Christians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a stone within us, entering into Heaven? Will it not be a mysterie unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold such hypocritical Christians as the most part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to see those that have been cloathed with hypocrisie and guile, now cloathed with the robes of immortal Glory? And will it not be a mysterie unto self denied *Paul*, when he shall behold so proud and selfish Christians enter into Heaven? Give me leave to say this, go where we will, we shall be matchlesse and singular; for if we shall go into eternity of pain, we shall be the greatest debtors unto the infinit justice of God, in regard of mercies we have received: and if we shall enter into eternity of joy, we shall be

## Great and precious Promises. 3

be the greatest debtors unto the spotlesse grace of Christ, in regard of mercy we have abused. There shall be none in heaven like to us, and if we shall go to hell, there shall be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but adde thus further before I come to the words, go where we will, we shall be out of doubt with our condition: Within a short time a real Christian shall be exalted above the reach of his misbelieving, a hypocrite shall be depressed below the reach of his faith, and one that is grossly in nature, he shall be abased beyond the reach of his presumption: A Christian ere long shall misbelieve no more; a hypocrite ere long shall believe no more; and one that is grossly in nature shall ere long presume no more: there is no misbelief in heaven, and there is no faith nor presumption of well being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to speak to, we told you when first we began our discourse upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith under a twofold notion and consideration. first, As it is justifying: And, secondly, as it is sanctifying. For the first, we resolved to speak to it in a twofold consideration. First, As it closeth with Christ simply as the object upon which it resteth, and of this we have spoken from that place, *1 Joh. 1. 3. 23.* Secondly, As it closeth with Christ, as held forth in the Promises. And now being to speak of it in this consideration, we have made choise of this place, in which those things concerning the promises, shortly,

#### 4 *Great and precious Promises.*

1. Ye have that fountain and spring from whence the promises do flow, holden forth in the first words of the verse, *Whereby*, or (as the words may be more fitly rendered) *By whom* relating unto Jesus Christ who is the original and spring of all the Promises.

2. The properties of the Promises, and these are, 1. The freedom of the promises held forth in that word, *Given*, whereby are *given*, which speaketh this, that the promises are free gifts flowing only from good pleasure, 2. Their unchangeablenesse, and that is holden forth also in the word, *Given*, the gifts and calling of God, being without repentance. 3. That they are *exceeding great*, and the Promises are called great, either in respect of that price that was laid down to purchase the Promises, or they are called great in respect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are *precious*; Now the Promises are called precious; either in respect of their originall, that they come from precious Christ; or else in respect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object, *quo*, or by which) of *precious* Faith, as it is called in the first verse of this Chapter; or else they are precious, because they are things that a Christian ought to put a high account upon; for the word that is rendered *precious* may likewise be rendered *honourable*, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promises.

3. We have holden forth in the words the  
great



## Great and precious Promises. 5

from great advantage of the Promises, By them  
forth we are made partakers of the divine nature :  
reby, Now this is not to be understood of any es-  
ren- sentiall conversion of our substance into the  
Christ substance of God , but of a Christians having  
the the divine vertues of Jesus Christ impressed  
and upon his soul , and expressed in his life and  
conversacion.

And there is this lastly, concerning the pro-  
mises in the words , even the time when the  
promises are eminently accomplished ; It is,  
when we have escaped ; or as the word is,  
plea- *When we have fled from the corruptions that are*  
that *in the world through lust :* That is the time  
the when a Christian meeteth with the accom-  
at re- plishment of the Promises.

Now before we can speak to any of these,  
er in we must speak a little unto some things as  
ya to necessary to be known , in order to the bet-  
alled ter understanding of all. 1. We shall not  
are dwell long in pointing out unto you what  
pre- is a promise : We conceive it is a glorious  
reci- discovery of the good will of God towards  
that sinners, and withall , a purpose and intend-  
se in ment, and (if we may say) an engagement  
t (I to bestow some spiritual or temporal good  
f pre- upon them , or to withhold some spiritual  
se of or temporal evil from them : And certain it  
, be- is , that in this description of the promise,  
ught word there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and  
ren- Truth , betwixt Righteousnesse and Peace,  
unto they kisse one another : Neither shall we  
Pro- stand long to point out the distinction of the  
s the promises : 1. There are some promises that  
great are conditional, and there are some promises  
that

## 6 Great and precious Promises.

that are absolute, absolute promises are these that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them; such a promise is that, that God will destroy the world no more by water, that is an absolute promise; such a promise was that of God sending his Son into the World, that was an absolute promise; and such is that promise of conversion, in giving the heart of flesh, it is an absolute promise: As for the conditionall promises, they are these that do require some condition to be performed by the Christian, before the accomplishment of the promise, such as that promise of Salvation, it requireth believing as going before it, *He that believeth shall be saved*; And pardon, it is promised unto a Christian upon Repentance: and yet we confesse, that there is not a conditional promise that is in all the Covenant of Grace, but it may be reduced unto an absolute promise, in regard that the thing promised (in the conditional promise) is one absolute free gift, and the condition of the promise is another. 2. There are some promises that are temporal, and some that are spiritual; temporal promises are these, that promise some temporal thing unto a Christian, and spiritual promises are these, that promise the bestowing of something that is of everlasting concernment. 3. There are some promises that are not accomplished in this life, such as this, *That wee shall see him as he is, and shall be made like unto him*: But for the promises of Faith and of Justification, these are accomplished in this life,

## Great and precious Promises. 7

life. 4. There are some promises that are extraordinary, and there are some promises that are common : extraordinary promises are these, that are given to some particular Believer as a singular privilege : such was that promise that was given to *Abraham*, that *in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed*, and that promise that was given to *Rebekah*, *That the elder should serve the younger* : As for common promises, they are these, that every believer in Christ hath a right to make use of.

Neither shall we stand long to point out that it is the duty of a Christian to be much in the exercise of Faith, upon the promises ; it is clear from *Psal. 62. 8. Trust in him at all times ye people* : and it is clear from the practice of that precious cloud of witnesses, recorded of in *Heb. 11.* that spent their dayes in imbracing of the Promises. But, 7. We would have you consider, that it is more easie for a Christian to believe spiritual Promises, then to believe temporal promises ; it is easier to trust Christ for eternal Salvation, then to trust him for our daily food when we are reduced unto straits ; and the grounds upon which we assert this, may be these ; 1. Because it is hard for a Christian to believe that Christs death reacheth for the purchasing of temporall promises, which more easily he taketh up in spiritual promises ; for a Christian can hardly believe that such a thing was in Christs intention, as to die for his daily food, which yet is most certain, if we consider it as a special mercy.

2. In

## 8 *Great and precious Promises.*

2. In a Christians believing of spiritual promises, there is often some sense and reason that helpeth him to the exercise of Faith; at least, they presse not the contrary; but to believe a temporal promise, when a Christian is redacted unto a strait, and that he can see no outgate present, sense and reason stands upon the top of his Faith, and presseth him to despair: As for instance, when a Christian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to sup at night, to believe that there is a promise upon which he may rest, that he shall not want his food; but if that the Lord had service for him he will provide: Here, he hath not only reason to dispute against, but the strong pinching sense of hunger, both crying out, *How can bread be given in the wilderness?* 3. The tentations that assault a Christian to misbelieve upon temporal promises, they are more subtile and more conatural to a Christian, then his temptations that assault him in resting upon spiritual promises: When a Christian is in straits in the world, the temptations that hinder his exercise of Faith, they are more consonant to flesh and blood; we are ready to yeeld to misbelief then, because we think it is rational, and speaketh the truth. 4. A Christian is often so affrighted by his daily failings, or some particular more grosse out-breakings in his life, that howbeit he may (through grace) be helped to believe that the Lord shall make out these promises which concern his eternal salvation, and so

*Great and precious Promises.* 9

do him good in the latter end : yet may he be sadly perplexed and distrustfull in making use of any particular temporary promise, for drawing forth any comfort or encouragement therefrom , as to his present exigent : because he knoweth, that although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet may he take vengeance on their inventions, Psal.99. 8. and therefore may punish his present failing with the like calamities as he hath done others. 5. There is also much of a natural and carnal self love to a present life, remaining in the best, that we are many times worse to satisfie in our securities for the things of this life, then of that which is to come, and can more easily trust the Lord for our souls, then for our bodies ; so that though his naked word will sometimes satisfie us for the one, yet it will not for the other : And the last ground of it may be a Christians unacquaintednesse with that lot of exercising Faith upon temporal promises, there being many who think not that there is use for Faith, except for Salvation and the things above, which maketh his Faith upon these more difficult then upon promises that are spiritual : And this may appear most clearly, in that we find men more easily bear their spirituall wants ( even a Christian that is most exercised ) then they bear their temporal want ; and more corruption and impatience doth arise from temporal want, then from spiritual want.

2. Consider, That all a Christians duties are turned over into promises : there is not

## 10 Great and precious Promises.

a duty that is required of a Christian, but it is converted into a Promise. Is not Faith a duty, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye should believe?* And is not that turned over in a promise, *Jer.* 3. 19. *Thou shalt call me thy Father?* The word importeth not only an act of necessity, but of violence, thou shalt do it: And in the thirteenth of *Zechary*, at the close, *Thou shalt call me thy Father*, and so in *Ezek.* 11. 19. Is not mortification a Christians duty, *Colos.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members;* and it is turned over in a promise, *Jer.* 32. 28. and *Ezek.* 36. 25, 29. where he promiseth, that he will purge away all their uncleannesses: and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 19. *I will subdue* (said he) *all thine iniquities*, it is not said, *thou must subdue them*; but, *I will do it*, Is not also the knowledge of God a commanded duty? and yet it is turned over in a promise in the Covenant of Grace; *They shall know me from the highest to the lowest*, neither shall there be need any more that one should say, *know the Lord*, for they shall be all taught of me. Is not the commandment of fear your duty, as is clear from *Eccles.* 12. 13. and yet that is likewise turned over in a promise; *I will put my fear in their inward parts*, they they shall not depart away from me: So tenderneſſe is a Christians duty, and yet that is turned over in a promise, *I will take away their heart of ſtone*, and give them a heart of *ſeſh*. And that I may ſay no more of this, look but to theſe four places, and there ye will ſee almoſt all duties turned over in promiſes.

## Great and precious Promises. 11

mises : there is *Jer. 31. Jer. 32. Ezek 11.* and *Ezek. 36.* ye will see all the duties of the Covenant converted into Promises. But may not some say , what advantage is there of this ? much certainly, every way : That the duties are turned over into promises ; it may give a Christian hope, that he shall once perform these duties : Will ye not once be tender ? Yes certainly, because your tenderneſſe lieth within a promise ; Will ye not once be much in the exerciſe of fear ? No doubt ye will , and the ground of it is this, because your fear lieth within a promise, and ſo of the reſt. And 2. There is this advantage of it , that all the duties required of a Christian are turned over in promises because by this means, a Christian may go to God when he cannot perform ſuch a duty, and deſire him to fulfill his word, and accompliſh his promise; and ſo may make uſe not only of the Omnipotency of God, but of the faithfulneſſe of God alſo.

There is this third Conſideration that we would propoſe, that there are ſome things of a Christian within a promise, that he doth not believe to be within it , eſpecially theſe three : Firſt, the challenges of a Christian are within a promise, when ye are convinced, that is the accompliſhment of a promise, this is clear from *Iſai. 30 21.* where convictions and challenges are turned over in a promise ; *When thou art turning unto the right hand or to the left , thine ears ſhall hear a voice behind thee, crying, this is the way, walk in it :* And it may be clear, that our convictions

## 12 Great and precious Promises.

tions are the accomplishment of promises, because it is a work of the Comforter, as well to convince, *John 16. 9.* as it is for him to make one rejoyce: and if a Christian could believe that his challenges were the accomplishment of a promise, he might embrace his challenges, he might see the faithfulness of God in his challenges, and he might see much love in his challenges. 2. A Christians crosse is within a promise, so that when a Christian meets with such affliction, he may sit down and cry out, this is the accomplishment of a promise, and this is clear from *Psal. 89. 31, 32.* wherein in the midst of the promises of the Covenant of Grace, that promise of visiting their iniquities with rods, is put in the bosome of them: and from *Psal. 119. 77.* *In faithfulness hast thou afflicted me;* Why doth David say in faithfulness? It was this, because his crosse was the accomplishment of a promise: and it may be clear also from that word, *Heb. 12. 7.* *Forget not the exhortation,* (speaking of the crosse) the word is, *Forget not the consolation that speaketh unto you,* As if the holy Ghost did say, crosses do yeeld much consolation, as in vers. 11. *They yeeld the peaceable fruits of righteousness:* And if this were believed, that our crosses were the accomplishment of the promises, it would help a Christian unto much humble submission, and there would not be murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accomplishment of a promise: Yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe that



## Great and precious Promises. 13

that our crosses were the accomplishment of a promise, we would be much in advancing holiness under our crosse. There is nothing that obstructeth the sweet fruits of righteousness under a crosse so much as impatience: and I would say this to commend the crosse, a Christian never moveth so swiftly to heaven, as when he is under a sanctified crosse; a crosse when it is sanctified, will prove a Christians motion to Heaven, more then ten enjoyments, for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way as much as further it. And there is this, Thirdly, that is within the promises, even your daily food, and the hairs of your head, the hairs of a Christians head are numbered, and within the Covenant. So that ye may see what a high respect Christ hath put upon Christians, that is clear from that word, *Psal 138. 5. 8. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him, He will ever be mindfull of His Covenant.*

Our fourth consideration shall be, to point out a little these grounds upon which Christ doth delay his accomplishment of the promises; It is certain that a Christian is oftentimes put to this, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* and cryeth out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail;* and the grounds of this delay are these: 1. Christ knoweth that a Christian can oftentimes better improve the delay of the accomplishment of the promise, then he can improve the accomplishment it self: we might find this in our experience (it being for the most

## 14 Great and precious Promises.

most part) easier for a Christian to bear his crosses, then to bear his enjoyments. I think *David* never had so sweet a time as then, when he was pursued as a Partridge by his son *Absolon*; then grace did breath forth most sweetly in his actions: but let *David* be under prosperity, and then we see he falleth in the sin of Adultery. And therefore never repine when ye are under a crosse; for certainly, if we had spirituall understanding, we would not judge it so great a hazard to be under a crosse, as under prosperitie, since we have greater strength to bear the one, then to endure the other.

2. The slothfulnessse of a Christian to whom the promises are made, this makes the promises to be delayed in their performance, as was clear in the people of *Israel*; they are fourty years in a wilderness, before that promise of entering into *Canaan* is accomplished; It was a promise that could have been accomplished in a few dayes, and yet because of their sin, it was not accomplished for fourty years, as ye may see from that word in *Numb.* 14. 33, 34. 3. The accomplishment of the promises is delayed, that Faith may be more put in exercise; this is clear from that remarkable word, *Psal.* 105. 19. *Untill the time that his word came*; that is, unill the word of the Lord was accomplished; *The word of the Lord tried him*, that is, it was the matter of his exercise, an exercise especially unto Faith; for indeed it is much for a Christian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accomplishment.

The

## Great and precious Promises. 15

The fourth ground of delay is, that the exercise of prayer may be more; and it is certain, that the best improvement of delays is, to be much in prayer; the promises they do occasion prayer, as is clear from *Exod. 4.* last. *They believed, and bowed down their heads and worshipped,* and from *2 Sam. 7.* 27. where the great promises being made to David, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer unto God,* and it is clear from *Psal. 119.* 49. *Perform the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* It is a bad improvement of delays when we turn impatient; and it is a bad improvement of delays, when we quite our confidence. Know that promises are accomplished after delays, and they have a luster upon them that may compence all the delay.

5. There is this other ground of the delays of accomplishment of the promises, even that the thing that is promised may be more sweet to a Christian when it cometh: this is clear from that word of Solomon, *Prov. 13.* 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire doth come, it is as a tree of life;* O but a mercy that cometh to a Christian through a promise, it is sweet; yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accomplishment of a promise, is more sweet than a feast of fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined; to take up your bread and your drink as the accomplishment of your promises, it would make them refreshfull to you. 6. The Lord delays his promises, that a Christian may be more in the

## 16 *Great and precious Promises.*

the exercise of dependency, and may be alwayes kept about the throne. A Christian goeth to God from a threefold principle, he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of necessity, and from a principle of love: but would you know that which putteth the Christian ofteneft to God? it is a principle of necessity: and believe it, that if necessity did not drive a Christian unto the foot of the Throne, we would seldom go from a principle of love, or from a principle of faith. And there is this last ground of the delay of the accomplishment of the promises, that the glory of the wisdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accomplishment of the promise. When the promise is long beneath ground, then the wisdom and power of God doth more appear in the accomplishment of that promise. And from this I would only say to Christians that are under that exercise, complaining of the want of the performance of the promises, these few things: 1. Believe that the promise shall once be accomplished, *that though the vision tarry, yet at last it shall speak.* 2. Believe, that every hours delay of the accomplishment of the promise hath a sweet design of love: there is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Christian, as is clear from that word, *Rom. 8. 28.* And, 3. that promise that cometh after long delays, it hath these three sweet and soul-refreshing attendants. 1. It is performed most seasonably, a Christian if he will observe, he will see infinite wisdom

## Great and precious Promises. 17

wisdome shining in timeing the accompaniment of the promise to such a particular day : a Christian will be constrained to cry out, if the promise had been fulfilled before there had been no such Art of wisdome appearing in the performance of it. 2. That the promise when it is accomplished, will engage a Christian more in the exercise of love, than four promises accomplished at a short and smaller time : there is nothing that will so inflame the soul with love, as to have a promise accomplished after delays. And, 3. the promises accomplished after delays, have much sense waiting upon the performance thereof : I think hardly a Christian ever met with the accomplishment of a promise after long delay, but his soul was made as a watered garden, and as Springs of water whose waters fail not ; this promise faileth and cometh to a Christian perfumed with love.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, and shall only speak to these six defects of a Christians faith in believing the promises. 1. That our faith is impatient, wee cannot stay upon the promise if it be delayed : Hence ye will see, that in Scripture often patience is annexed to faith ; which speaketh this, That it is impossible for a Christian to believe as he ought, that without the exercise of patience. See Heb. 6. 12. Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promise : And that word in the Revelation, *This is the faith and patience of the Saints.* 2. Our faith in closing with

## 18 Great and precious Promises.

with the Promises, it is most unconstant: A Christian when first a promise is born in upon his spirit, he will then believe the promise and joyn with it; but after six or seven dayes go about, he will change his Faith: this is remarkably clear from *Exod. 4. 31.* compared with *Exod. 6. 9.* When first the promise cometh to the people of *Israel*, that they shall go out of *Egypt*, it is said of them in the fourth Chapter at the close, *They believed the Promise, and worshipped:* But look to them in *Exod. 6. 9.* and there ye will see them not believing, because of *bitterness and anxiety of heart*: And I will tell you the grounds why our Faith is unconstant. 1. Sometimes the reading of a promise to a Christian will be as his savory meat; sometimes when a Christian will read one time in the Covenant, it will be perfumed with love, and his soul will be transported with joy after it, and at another time when he shall read that promise again, it will be tastelesse as the white of an egge, and as his sorrowfull meat. 2. That we are not much in studying the exercise of the things that are promised, which certainly would cut short many of our debates. There is this third defect of our Faith, That we are not diligent, a diligent faith we call this, that after a Christian hath believed, he would be much in the exercise of prayer, for the accomplishment of the promise, he would be much in the exercise of meditation, to make that promise sweet and lively to him. And a fourth defect is this, We build our faith

more

## Great and precious Promises. 19

more upon Dispensations than upon the Word: when dispensations say that which the promise saith, then we will believe: but when dispensation speaketh the contrary language unto the promise, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great mysteries of believing, it is hard for a Christian to believe when the Commentary seemeth to destroy the Text, that is, when the Commentary seemeth to declare, that the promise shall never be accomplished. To sum it is this, It is hard to believe when dispensations will say, the Word of the Lord will fail, and when promises bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Christian to take impossibilities in the one hand, and the word of promise in the other, and say, O precious Christ reconcile these two together, that impossibilities do not destroy the promise, but that the promise may be accomplished notwithstanding of this. 3. We have this defect of faith amongst us, That we build our faith more upon sense, then upon the word of promise; when a Christian is in a good frame, he will believe, but when Christ hideth his face, he will then give over his hope. And lastly, there is this, That our faith upon the promises is general, we believe the truth of the promises, but we study not to make a particular application of them. I shall not stand long to make any use of what we have spoken. Only I would have the Christians of this age, and those that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing

B

of

of the promises. A Christian neglecteth these three duties of Religion most, he neglecteth the duty of self examining, the duty of believing the promises, and that noble soul exalting duty of meditation: these three duties a Christian doth so constantly neglect, that almost he is above the reach of conviction, though he doth neglect them.

But I would say a word unto these that are destitute of the Faith of the promises, and are strangers unto these blessed things that are recorded within the Covenant: And it is only this; doubtlesse ye must believe on your senses, if ye will not believe his Word. It is a question indeed, Which of all the senses shall be most satisfied in heaven, whether that of seeing, when we shall behold the King in his beauty, and see him as he is, or that of hearing, when we shall hear these melodious *Hallelujahs* of that innumerable company, which are about the Throne, without any jarring amongst them all, or that of smelling, when we shall find the sweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed with all the powders of the merchant; or, that of touching, when we find *Maries* inhibition taken off, *Touch me not*, and be admitted to embrace him who is now ascended to his Father; Or, that of tasting, when we shall drink of these rivers of Consolation, that shall never run dry. This, I say, is indeed a question. But give me leave to tell you that the atheists and enemies of God: It is also a question, Which of all the five senses of a Reprobate shall be tormented in Hell, and at what



these what would ye answer to it now? Whether  
 think ye the sense of sight, when ye shall be-  
 lieve hold that darknesse of wrath, the devil and  
 his angels, and your fellow prisoners in that  
 prison? Or whether shall your sense of  
 hearing be most tormented in hell, when ye  
 shall hear those screechings and howlings  
 that shall eternally ascend up before God,  
 by the souls that are in prison? O but the  
 greatest enemy would have compassion upon  
 his enemy, to hear their cries: Or, whether  
 will ye say the sense of tasting shall be most  
 tormented, when ye shall drink of these  
 waters of brimstone? Or, will the sense of  
 touching, when ye shall be eternally scorched  
 with these flames of eternal indignation?  
 Or the sense of smelling, when ye shall eternally  
 be, as it were, suffocated with the  
 smoke of that sulphurous furnace that shall  
 never be quenched? O think you if Cain  
 should come from hell and preach that do-  
 ctrine, that we should not persecute the  
 saints, would we listen unto him? If Ab-  
 omable should come from hell, and should  
 preach against the evil of ambition, would ye  
 listen unto him? And if Achitophel should  
 rise from the dead and preach that doctrine  
 to you, *Let not the wise man glory in his  
 wisdom*, would we stop our ears? Or if  
 Judas would come from hell and preach to  
 you the evil of hypocrisie, in betraying the  
 Son of man with a kisse, would we believe  
 him? Or if Dives that is recorded in the  
 Gospel should come from hell, and choise  
 that Text to preach upon, *Jam. 5. 1. Go to*  
 what

**22** Great and precious Promises.

ye richmen and howl, and weep for your miseries that shall come upon you. And if Demas would come and second him with that word love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: I fear ye would cry out wee will embrace that doctrine at another time. Wee desire not to insist much upon these, but O to believe, that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternitie of joy. I will give you a description of the atheist, and let him think upon it, it is easie to convince hundreds of you, that ye want the fear of God, then that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh, an imaginary faith and a conceit of love, will yee ever quench these two idols. I confesse, once ye shall have a faith that no man shall ever rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once yee enter into eternitie of pain there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh and he shall render vengeance unto them that know him not. To his blessed and most precious Name wee desire to give praise.

## SERMON II.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**T**Hough Justice and Judgement be the habitation of His Throne, yet mercy and truth do go before it as two divine Ushers to convey us home unto God. There are these two things that we would have Christians principally to study. 1. That ye would be much in the study of these wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Christ: And, 2. that ye would be much in the study of these infinite acts of precious condescendency that Christ hath manifested towards you, that the one may provoke you unto sorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a sweet astonishment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Christ should present that challenge unto you. which Absalon presented unto Hushai, *Is this thy kindnesse unto thy friend?* O beloved, what could you answer, when you were thus reproved? I think if Christ had not forgetfulness for that blessed end, to forget the wrongs and injuries of his own;

## 24 *Great and precious Promises.*

I know not unto what use Christ should have forgetfulnesse, for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works, but he hath a blessed arte of forgetting our wrongs; though we may say upon the contrary, that we have a cursed arte of forgetting them our selves. There are these three things that Christians doth forget; they forget much Christ, that is the great author of the promises, so that he may charge them with this, *Why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and these divine receipts of love that Christ hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquities, yea sometimes they forget them before Christ doth forget them and passe an act of pardon upon them. I shall not stand long to plead with you for your undervaluings of that blessed and noble Plant of renown; I think if there were no more to evidence that low esteem that we have of Christ, but only this, that we are so much in sleighting the promises, it were more than sufficient: but besides, is there not this to testifie how much you undervalue that *holy and just one*; that ye study more to have an outward conformity unto him, than to have an inward. We may call the Christians of this time *Nephthali*; they are *as a hind let loose*, and they give goodly words, but we do not give Christ goodly practices: And is there not this also that testifierh our undervaluings of Christ, that we slight so much, secret and retired correspondence and communion with him? I suppose there are some that are here, whose

consciences beareth them record, they do not exercise themselves unto godlinesse, and I shall only say that word, that Gideon spake in another case, *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* Such a spirit of formality, such a spirit of lazinesse, such a spirit of hardnesse, and such a spirit of undervaluing of Christ? I suppose, that if there were a Chronicle written of all the lives of the Saints that have been since Adams dayes, and the Christians of this time should read over that Chronicle, when they should begin and read the life of Adam, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his, and when they should read the life of Abel, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his; and when they should read the life of Enoch, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his; O! to which of the Saints can we go: and if ye should call, is there any that would answer you, *your life is like mine.*

But to come to the words, we told you at the last occasion that we spake upon them, that there were these things concerning the promises holden forth in them. 1. The rise of the promises is holden forth in these words, *Whereby*, or as we cleared the words may be thus rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jesus Christ.

The second thing concerning the promises holden forth in the verse is, the property of the promise, and they are these four. 1. That the promises are free, holden forth in that word, *Whereby are given unto us*; all the promises

## 26 Great and precious Promises.

promises of the everlasting Covenant are gifts, and not debt. There is that second property of the promises, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in that word, *Given*, the gifts and calling of God being *without repentance*. And the third property of the promises was, That they were *exceeding great*. And the fourth, That they were *exceeding precious*.

The third thing concerning the promises, holden forth in the words, is the advantage that floweth to a Christian by the promises, that by them they might be *made partakers of the divine nature*.

And the last thing concerning them was, that time when the promises were especially accomplished, it was then when we had *escaped the pollutions of the world through lust*.

Now, as for the first thing, to wit, the fountain, original and rise of the promises, which is Jesus Christ, *By whom*; In speaking unto this, we shall speak a little unto the two. 1. In what respects Christ may be said to be the fountain and original of the promises; and we conceive he may be said to be so. First, Because he purchased the promises unto us by his own precious blood. There is not a promise in all the everlasting Covenant, but it is the price of the blood of the Son of God; this is clear in *Ephes, 2. 12, 13.* where speaking of the Gentiles, that they were strangers unto the Covenant of promise; he setteth down in the 13. verse, the way by which they were brought

## Great and precious Promises. 27

brought near unto the Covenant, and had right unto it, it was *through the blood of his cross*: and it is clear in *Ephes. 3. 9.* that the promises of the Gospel were given unto us in him, that is, through the purchase of him, and his merits: and *1 Pet. 1. 19.* where we are said to be bought by his blood: for the promise of Redemption, was the price of blood. Secondly, Christ may be said to be the fountain of the Promises, in this respect, that hee is the Person unto whom the promises of the Covenant are first made, and through him are made over unto us; this is clear in *Gal. 3. 16.* the promises were given unto Abraham, not unto many seeds, but as unto one, that is Christ; and it is clear from *2 Tim. 1. 9.* where the promises of Grace and Salvation are said to be given unto us in him before the world was made: It is true, that the promises are not given to Christ, considered only as the Son of God, (for so he had no other relation to us then the Father of the holy Ghost) but yet they are, first, made to him as the Mediator and head of his Church; and as that blessed *Dayes man*, and King of Saints, and the Great Lord keeper of all the Rights of the young heirs of Glory; And we all receive of his fulnesse, and grace for grace. Thirdly, There is this respect, in which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, that he it is by whom we have a right unto all the promises; this is clear, *2 Cor. 3. 12, 13.* where these two are conjoynd, *ye are Christs*, and *then all things are yours*: If once a soul

Be close

## 28 Great and precious Promises.

close with Christ in the Covenant of Promise, there is not one promise in Scripture but he may write this superscription above it, *This is mine, this is mine.* Fourthly Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in regard that he is the Person that applyeth the promises, and maketh us to rest upon them, and to believe them, this David did acknowledge, *Psal. 119. 49. Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope: as if David said I had never believed a promise, except thou hadst caused me, and it is clear, Ephes. 2. 8* where faith is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the promises, it is the royal donation and gift of Christ. Fifthly, He may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in that he qualifyeth us for the accomplishment of them. Christ giveth us strength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promise, and Christ he infuseth habitual grace in us, by which we may be helped to exercise faith upon the promises; so that if all the Scripture were promises, yet if Christ did not help us, we would never believe a promise, and there would never a promise be accomplished unto us. Sixthly The last respect in which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, is, That all the promises of the everlasting Covenant they have their accomplishment through him according to that word, *2 Cor. 1. 20. All the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen* so that ye are to blesse Christ, not only for the giving of the promises, but for the accomplishment of them also.

Tha



*Great and precious Promises.* 29

That which secondly we shall speak to from this, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, shall be to presse upon Christians these three excellent and soul concerning duties. The first, That they would not have a light account of the promises, since they are rivolets and streams that flow from that blessed Ocean: O but if a Christian did believe that the promise that he hath for his daily bread, it was bought with the blood of the second Person of the blessed Trinity, would he not have an high account of that promise? And let me tell you, it is impossible for the promises to be in high account with you, till once ye reduce them unto their rise, and to their fountain: but once know that all the promises are sweet streams of love that have run through the heart of precious Christ, and from thence they have flowed unto you, and then when this is believed, how shall ye sit down and comfort your selves in the promises, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The second duty that we presse upon you from this, is, That since Christ is the fountain and original of the Promises, be much to the application of the Promises: And here I shall speak a little upon these three things. I. A little unto the evidences and marks of those that have a right to apply the promises; and shall only name unto you these few: The first is, to be a person under convictions of sensible need and necessity of such a promise; have ye convictions of such necessity; Then from that ye may infer, I have

## 30 *Great and precious Promises.*

have a right to the promises, and are not these glad tidings? I know there are some that are under such convictions of their sin, that they think it boldness to apply the promises. But I would say this unto you, that if ye were under sensible convictions of your losse, ye would give a world for an hair of a promise whereby to hang: believe it, the exercise of misbelief is never at its height, till we would be content to dig through the earth to get a promise, and till we were at that, that our souls would pursue after them from the one end of the world to the other: And for the grounds of this assertion, that sensible necessity giveth a right to the promises, if ye will look to these great promises of the everlasting Covenant, are they not given to that Christian that is under a need, *Isai. 55. 1, 2.* and *Matth. 11. 28.* where the great promise of the Gospel is given out, and the invitation of Jesus Christ, is unto these that are *weary and heavy laden.* Christ would account it an excellent courtesie, that ye would not dispute, but believe, and that ye would look upon your necessities as his call to believe the promises.

2. A person that hath a high account of the *Promises*, he hath a right to apply the promises: Let once your soul close with Christ by Faith and Love, and then you may with boldnesse close with the Promises. I confesse, if we were more in believing the promises, we would have a higher and more full esteem of the Promiser: Would ye know the reason that Christ is not accounted

match

Great and precious Promises. 31

matchlesse, it is because of this, our necessities of the promises is not alwayes within our sight, and our exercising of Faith upon the promises is not our daily work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promise; that which is born in upon a Christians spirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under most sensible exercise under his own infirmities, he hath readily a right to apply that promise: As for instance, when a Christian is debating himself out of Christ, which is but an unpleasant exercise; to meet with a promise born in upon their spirit, that giveth them some ground of hope, that they may apply and rest upon Christ: or when a Christian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promise born in upon his spirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his triall, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promise. 4. There is that evidence, persons that have an high account of the promises, they have a right to apply the promises, it is an excellent and most concerning work for a Christian to believe the excellency of the promises, when he cannot have the actual application of the Promises. For when once a Christian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlasting Covenant are matchlesse in his eyes; then that is the *valley of Achor*, and a door of hope, that ere long Christ will apply them. 5. When a Christian hath great delight in the promises, when they are sweet to his taste, and are the refreshing and rejoycing of his

### 32 *Great and precious Promises.*

his heart, that is an undeniable sign that he hath a right to make use of such promises. Were your souls never refreshed by reading of the boundlesse Covenant of love, at the sweet promises that are in it? I would have Christians marking these promises that have upholden them in their straits, I would have them marking the promises that have been lively to their souls, and say, This once was my goodly meet, and made me to rejoyce in the *house of my affliction*; and I would have a Christian marking the time of the accomplishment of the Promises, in which he will see infinite wisdom shining in ordering the accomplishment of the promises to such a time. And I would have a Christian marking the frame of his own spirit, when the promises are accomplished (as ye will find often in Scripture) and by all this, ye should find such a reviving and profitable delight in the promises, that should give a very full evidence of your right unto them. 6. Lastly, when a Christian under straits can receive consolation from no other thing, but all prove Physicians of no value and miserable comforters: when a Christian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under such a crosse but in the faith of the promises, that is an evidence that this person hath a right to the promises. I would only say this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promises, and your little exercise of faith? I would pose you with this, when last studied ye to apply any promise of the  
Cove

Covenant of Grace? When last did ye exercise faith upon any of them? Shall I tell you what is the practise of the most part of us, we study perhaps to apply one promise, but for the rest of the promises we lay them aside, and do totally neglect them; we study to apply the promises of salvation, and of having redemption through Christ, but for the promises of Sanctification, for the promises to help us to perform duties, for the promises to support us under the crosse, for the promises to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promises in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of these. O but if a Christian were believing the promises, he might sit down even while he is here, and sing one of the songs of Zion, though yet *but in a strange land*.

The second thing that I shall speak to upon the application of the promise, shall be to propose unto you some rules that ye would make use of in the application of them, and shall name unto you these.

First, Study these four things, one is the faithfulness and truth of the promises; that such a thing is the saying of him that is *the faithful witness*, and *Amen*: This was the practice of *Paul*, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* the way how he was brought to make application of the promise, was, 1. by laying down that conclusion, this is a faithfull saying; and *Rev. 22.* from the beginning to the 6. verse, when there are great promises made, and much spoken to the commendation of heaven, this

### 34 Great and precious Promises.

is subjoynd in the 6. verse, *These are the faithfull and true sayings of God* : As if John had said, all that I have spoken concerning heaven, will be to no purpose, except ye believe the truth of the promises; and this was the practice of David, 2 Sam. 7. 28. *Thy words are truth, O Lord*, he subjoynd this unto the actual application of the promises.

2. Study the sweetness and excellency of the promises, this was the practice of Paul, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithfull saying*, and then he subjoyneeth, *and worthy of all acceptation* : And this was the practice of David, Psal. 119. 72. *I have esteemed the laws of thy mouth better then thousands of gold and silver*. O such an opinion, to esteem the promises better then thousands of gold ! It is heretodox amongst the most part of you, that prefer the world before the promises of the Covenant : and it was his practice, vers. 103. and vers. 162. *I rejoyce at thy word as one that findeth great spoil* : he had an higher account of the Promises, then to divide the spoil after war.

3. Let the Christian study the necessity that he hath of the promise, that there is no way of winning above that necessity but the closing with the promise, and laying hold upon it.

4. Lastly, A Christian would study the suitableness that is in the promise to answer their necessities, that if they be under need, there is a precious way of remedy manifested unto them by these.

The second rule that we would prescribe in the application of the promises, is, That

## Great and precious Promises. 35

ye do not expect sensible comforts immediately after ye have believed the promise, a Christian may apply the promises, and yet want the joy and sweetnesse that is in them: This is clear, *Psal. 119. 25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust.* There he is under much anxiety and much sorrow; and yet he is a believer of the promises in the mean time, as the words following doth clear, *Quicken me according to thy word*, he layeth claim to the promise, and this is clear in the 81. vers. of that Psalm, *My soul doth faint within me;* There is much exercise of sorrow, and yet he is a believer in the promise, *But I hope in thy word*: A Christian after he hath believed the promise, he would put a blank in Christs hand concerning the sweetnesse of the promises to be made out in its own time. What is sense? Is it the precious indulgence of Christ that he giveth to his own. I would presse this upon you, prophesie nothing before your believing of the promise; but, having believed, ye may surely prophesie that the promise shall be accomplished in its own time, and the word that he hath spoken shall certainly come to passe; but as for sense, as for quickening, as for comfort, as for receiving, ye must put a blank in the hand of Christ to dispense these things to you as he seeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the promises, is, That ye do not build your faith upon this, that the promises shall be accomplished, because probability and reason seem to say the thing: I would say this to a  
Chri-

## 36 Great and precious Promises.

Christian, that ye may oftentimes suspect the promise is not near to be accomplished when reason saith, *Behold the word of the Lord cometh*, and that oftentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to passe a conclusion, the Word is not at hand, and the time of the accomplishment of the promise is not near. Certainly many times before Christ accomplish the promises, he will learn us to be living above sense and reason, and he will have reason to submit to faith, and he will have probabilities to contradict the accomplishment of the promise; and when probabilities are furthest away, that is His time to work: this is clear in these two signal deliverances of the people of *Israel* from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod.* 3. 4, 5. and *Ezech.* 37. at the beginning. And therefore as a Christian would not quite his grip of the promises, because dispensations seem to contradict the accomplishment of the promise, and some time cryeth out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand, ye are to build your faith upon the promises, and not upon dispensations even when favourable; seeing that we know the way that Christ taketh many times to accomplish the promises, is by contrary means to our apprehension; *His paths are in the whirlwind*, and *his footsteps are not known*. And may we not cry out, *Who can take up the wayes of God*, whose waves are more subtil than the way of an eagle in the air, or the way of a serpent upon the rock, or the way of a ship upon the sea, &c.



The fourth rule that we would prescribe unto you in the application of the promises, is, That ye would close absolutely with the promises, I mean, without limiting the only One. There is a limited closing with the promise, which is the frequent exercise of our hearts; we will close with the promise, but with this restraint laid upon Christ, That whensoever we begin to believe the promises, all things might go as we desire; and this is the great occasion that we do so frequently reject our confidence, and do refuse our hope when God doth not answer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, We give you this rule, that ye would eye Christ much in the application of the promises. There is a threefold sight of Christ that a Christian should have when he applyeth the promises; a Christian should have a sight of the boundlesse and condescending love of Christ, that so he may be constrained to hope, and may be constrained to love. 2. A Christian should eye the faithfulness and unchangeableness of Christ, that what his blessed lips have spoken, he will also do, and what he hath said, he will likewise bring to passe. And, 3. in the application of promises, he must eye the omnipotency of Christ, that what he hath said, he is able to bring to passe. And O when shall we have occasion to sing that song, *What hath God wrought for us*, which was the song that Balaam sung who yet was but a profane wretch.

6. There

## 38 Great and precious Promises.

6. There is this rule that we would prescribe unto you in the application of the promises, that a Christian after he hath applied them, he would be much in the exercise of Prayer for the accomplishment of these promises; this was the practice of David, 2 Sam. 7. 27. When God in passing many precious promises; David doth subjoyn that word, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer*: And we see in Ezek. 36. 37. All alongs that Chapter, God is passing most excellent promises; and yet in vers. 37. this is subjoyned, *For all these things, I will be enquired of the house of Israel*: And in Jer. 29. 10, and 12. where the time is coming, when God would accomplish his good word (as he speaketh) that is subjoyned in vers. 12. *Then shall ye call upon me and seek after me*: And Daniel 9. 2, 3, when Daniel knew that the promise was near the time of its accomplishment, he hath set himself by prayer and supplication to seek the face of God. I would say these three words unto a Christian; The smallest mercy that a Christian meeteth with, if he can call it Samuel, that is, *The son of prayer*, and if ye can call it Isaac, that is, *The childe of promise*, he may then, and doth ordinarily receive much consolation in that mercy. O but a mercy flowing to a Christian through a promise, if it were but a drink of cold water, and a piece of brown bread, it will be more excellent chear, then all the dainties of the Kings of the earth. O but to

## Great and precious Promises. 39

eat and drink, taking these things as the accomplishment of the promises, this would make us eat our bread *with singleness of heart, and much chearfulnesse*. And there is this, secondly, I would say unto you, When a promise is accomplished, and a Christian is not much in the exercise of Prayer in the accomplishment of it, one to a hundred if hee loose not the sanctified use of the accomplishment of that promise. Ah, know yee not that a promise when it is accomplished, may bee a curse to a Christian. That word is most terrible, *Mal. 2. 2. I will curse your blessings*. And the last word that I would say to this, is, That a Christian who believeth the promises, notwithstanding that dispensations seem to contradict it, that promise shall be made most refreshfull unto his spirit, when it is accomplished. O but a Christian that never had much jealousie, nor much staggering about the accomplishment of the promise, when it cometh, it will bee most refreshfull unto him: And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealousie about the accomplishment of the promise, but it will impair the sweetnesse of the promise when it is accomplished, except so far, that the transcendant and free love of Christ is seen in the accomplishment of them, notwithstanding of our misbelief.

The last rule that I shall offer a Christian in his application of the promises, when ye meet with objections that yee cannot answer, but

40 *Great and precious Promises.*

but they do silence you; I will tell you what ye should do with them, misken these objections and lay them by. This was the practice of believing Abraham, Rom. 4. 9. *He considered not his own body being weak, and the deadnesse of Sarahs womb.* The weaknesse of his own body, and the deadnesse of Sarahs womb were so strong objections in the way of the accomplishment of the promises, that he could not answer them; and the way he taketh to refute them was, *He did not consider them*; as it were, he forgot those objections and went about his duty.

The third thing that we shall speak to, in relation to the application of the promises, shall be somewhat for helping a Christian that is standing at too great a distance, to get the promises applied.

First, A Christian would be much in the study of these experiences of the faithfulness of God, and what others have met with. When ye begin to apply a promise, ye may be helped in the Faith of applying promises, by beholding these great records of the faithfulness of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with Mary, Luke 1. 36. where helping her to believe that promise, that of her should be born the Messiah; this is the way that he strengthened her. *Thy cousin Elizabeth is now with childe, and hath gone six moneths, even she that was called barren.* And I shall onely name these two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, and strengthen you to believe the promises.

## Great and precious Promises. 41

promises upon this account. There is that word in *Exod. 12. 41. and 51.* It is a most remarkable saying, *At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, on that same very day, (there was not one day missed after the time that was set was accomplished) In that same very day they came out, and this is marked in ver. 51. again: And there is that word 1 Kings 8. 56. where Solomon, when he is singing most sweetly to God, he taketh an observation of this, Lo! (saith he) there hath not failed one word that God hath spoken to you by his servant Moses.*

Secondly, Ye would be much in the consideration of your own experiences, that you have in the accomplishment of promises formerly. This was *Dauids* way that he took to strengthen himself to believe the promise, *He that hath delivered me from the paw of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine,* 1 Sam. 17; 35. and 37. 46. And this is the practice of the Apostle *Paul*, 2 Tim. 1. 17, 18. *God hath delivered me from that wicked lion; And from thence he subjoyneth, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work: And this was his practice, 2 Cor. 1. 10. where these three are sweetly knit together, God hath delivered me, he doth deliver me, and he shall deliver me.* There is not one experience of this kinde, but it reacheth that unto your believing the promise, and do not call in question his faithfulness, and, our shall witness a

Thirdly,

## 42 Great and precious Promises.

Thirdly, There is that help; that yet study much the excellency of the promises that is the most noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promises, according to that word, *Psal. 119. 111. I have made thy testimonies my heritage for ever; and the ground of it is that, Because they are the joying of my heart.* The sweetnesse of the promises would engage our heart to apply them.

And there is that fourth help, a Christian would study the omnipotency of God, that so hee may bee helped to believe and apply the promise: This is clear in *Zeck. 12.* where God going to passe many excellent promises, hee ushers in that discourse with high and magestic descriptions of his power in that hee *stretcheth forth his heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.* And this was the practice of *Abraham, Rom. 4. 21.* the way how he came to believe the promise, *He counted him able that had made it, that he might perform it.*

Fifthly, For your help in applying the promises, Study much the unchangeableness of Christ, and his faithfulness, knowing that hee is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever. This was the way that *Sarah* came to the faith of the promises, *Heb. 11. 11. Shee believed, and the grounds of it is that shee judged him faithfull that had promised.* There is no one act of unbelief that a Christian falleth into, but it is laid

*Great and precious Promises.* 43

that God is not faithfull, and that hee is not true.

Now the last duty that wee would presse from this point, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, is, that wee may have an high esteem of the Promiser; even of Jesus Christ, *in whom they are yea, and Amen.* And I shall close all at this time with this, are there not many here, that have no respect unto him who is that *faithfull witnesse, and the Amen*; who hath promised us *himself, and all things*: and if yee will not take with the challenge, let your hearts but answer these two or three things: 1. Hath not the losse of things in the world affected your heart more, then ever absence from Christ did? Hath it not? And can such a soul say, I have an high account of the Promiser? Is it possible, that these that will mourne more under the absence of their Idols than for the want of him, that they can have so high account of Jesus Christ? I am persuaded of this, there are some Merchants, that the losse of their goods at the Sea, hath diverted them from their nights rest, and that absence from Christ never did divert them from their sleep one hour. O when will you love to find out Jesus Christ, and to enjoy his fellowship, make you rise up in the silent watches of the night, and to pursue after him. 2. Have not your souls delighted more on the enjoyment of the things of a world, than ever they did in the enjoyment of Christ? Is not this true, that the increase of wine and oyl, and of silver and gold hath

C

affected

#### +4 Great and precious Promises.

affected your hearts more with joy than ever Christ did? And have you a high esteem of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship and communion with the Promiser; Is this true? When went you to your prayers, but yee wearied ere yee went away? And have yee a high account of the Promiser? Is not that the language of your hearts; *O when shall the Sabbath be over? and when shall the new moon be gone, that I may pursue after my Idols?* I would pose you with this, if there were no eye to take notice of you, would you not slight secret prayer, would you not slight Family Prayer? Wee love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know there are atheists here that would love to go to heaven without Faith, Love, Prayer and Repentance, they would love to go to heaven by a way that never one went before them. And now I shall say but this one word to you that are the heirs of the promise, and have the blessed expectation of heaven, what ever the word do, esteem yee highly of him: O remember and comfort your selves in the thoughts of the blessed day which Christ (after hee hath past the sentence of condemnation upon the wicked) shall go in upon the head of the Troupes of the first born, hee shall walk before us through the Ports of the New Jerusalem, having Crowns of Immortal Glory upon his head, and then shall follow after Him His Angels, and then shall follow after Him the blessed company of the first born every one having the Harps of God in the



hand, and they shall be singing as they enter  
 through the Ports of the City, *Hallelujah*  
 unto him that was dead, and is alive, and now  
 liveth for evermore. O to believe that day  
 when first we shall all enter in through the  
 streets of the New Jerusalem, when we shall  
 be clothed in white robes, having Crowns  
 upon our head! O such a day, if it were  
 believed, might it make us often shake our  
 classe, and stretch out our necks, (as the word  
 is, *Rom. 8. 19*) till once we saw that blessed  
 day were approaching to us! There is no  
 wearying in heaven, the promises are now  
 accomplished unto them, and they are inher-  
 iting the promises; When shall that word  
 be accomplished, or when shall we have oc-  
 casion to say it? *Mark 1. 37. Behold all men*  
*seek after thee*; the word that these Disciples  
 spake to Christ: O study to love him, study  
 to believe on him, for bee perswaded hee is  
 upon his way. And I shall say no more but  
 this, that as all the promises that are within  
 the bounds of this everlasting Covenant, they  
 be yea, and Amen, in an imbraced Christ,  
 and laid hold on by faith; so I say, all the  
 verses that are in *Deut. 26. 27, 28.* and all the  
 verses that are within the volumn of the Book  
 of this Covenant, they shall be yea and Amen  
 in a despised Christ, and not laid hold upon  
 by faith.

## SERMON III.

<sup>2</sup> Pet. i. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**S**ometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in the paths of God, and in the wayes towards Zion as the chariots of Aminadab, when they are under the sound of living and quickening influences of heaven; and sometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in those blessed paths as Pharaohs chariots, they drive most heavily, when there is a cloud between the precious face of Christ and them: and wee conceive that sound and spirituall exercise of Faith upon the Promises, would make a Christians motion more swift towards heaven. We grant Christ hath three different wayes of guiding his saints and daughters to Glory: there are some that Christ carrieth to heaven in a chariot paved with love, that all alongs their life they are living within sight of that promised Land, and are taken up with the refreshing and tastes of the heavenly joyes; such a one was *Enoch*, who spent his dayes in walking with God: there are some that Christ guideth to heaven

*Great and precious Promises.* 47

heaven in a chariot that is drawn with speckled horses; they have mixed dispensations of sorrow and joy attending them in their walk, they have a winter and a summer, they have a night and a day, and such a one was *Job*. 3. There are some that Christ carryeth to Heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under distracting terrors of the most High, and are living perpetually to their own apprehensions upon the borders of hell, and such a one was *Heman*, whom Christ thus did guide to heaven: however, if wee shall go there, we need not much dispute the way how wee came, *for he doth all things well*. And upon the other part, Satan hath three different wayes of guiding souls unto everlasting torment; there are some that Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of delusions, making them believe that they are still going to heaven; and such are the hypocrites in *Sion*: and I shall say; I think that chariot was never so filled as it is in those dayes. O fear that anxious disappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with? An hypocrite hee hath strong hopes, hee hath strong idols, and hee hath strong delusions, these are his three attendants. And there are some that Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of profanity and ignorance of God, *whose judgement goeth before hand*, and they are known that they are going there. And there are some that Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of civility, whose Religion stands in this, concerning the letter of the Law to bee blamelesse,

## 48 *Great and precious Promises.*

And certainly, believing of the promises, and studying to exercise faith upon them, is that which might prevent many of these damnable soul destroying and murdering delusions that are within some of our hearts. There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Christ he is called precious 1 Pet. 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious faith with us,* and the promises they are called precious, in the words that we have read, and Faith (as it were) hath two blessed eyes, by one of those it beholdeth Christ, and by another of these it beholdeth the promises, and fixeth it self upon them. O Christians and expectants of Heaven, would you know what is the rise of all the sad things that have befallen you in these dayes? It is this in short, ye believe not the promises. O Christians, what is the reason that ye carry not your crosses with patience it is, because ye believe not the promises by which your soul must be upholden in the day of your affliction. O Christian, what is the rise of your little mortification? Is it not because ye believe not the promises for by them ye should be made partakers of the divine nature. O Christian, what is the ground that ye pray so little, and that ye pray with so little successe? It is, because ye believe not the promises. A Christian when he goeth to pray, he should take these two things along; 1. The sensible convictions of his necessities: And, 2. The precious promises that is given to answer

that necessity, the one would provoke fervency, and the other Faith. Are there not some here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promise, and that maketh you pray to so little purpose. O Christian, what is the reason of your so much sorrow, and of your little spiritual comfort? It is, that ye believe not the promises: It is no wonder that your names be called *Marah*, because ye exercise not faith upon the precious promises of God. I think without wronging you or any that are here; I doubt much if ever Christians had such hearts as the most part of us have; O what a heart is that, that can neither pray nor praise? both are alike mysteries unto them: What a heart is that, O Christian, that can neither believe promises, believe threatnings, nor obey commands? What a heart is that, that can neither sorrow for sin, nor rejoyce in God? and what a heart is that, that can neither love Christ when he is present, nor can they long for Christ when he is absent? and what a heart is that, O Christian, that can neither love heaven, nor can fear hell? and is there not such hearts with us, even with us that are here this day?

At the last occasion that we spake upon these words, we spake a little to the first thing in them, which was the rise and originall of the promises, holden forth in that word, *Whereby*, or *by whom*. The second thing in the words, was the properties of the promises; and wee told you that there were these four holden forth in the words.

## 50 Great and precious Promises.

The first property of the promises is, that they are free, which is imported in that word, *are given*; all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence you will see that oftentimes the tenor of the Covenant of Grace runs upon that strain, *I will give you*, as is clear, *Jer. 32. 39. I will give you one heart*, and *Ezek. 36. 26. I will give you a new heart*, and *Ezek. 11. 19. I will give you*; It is the strain of the language of the Covenant of Grace, *to give*.

Now in speaking upon this first property of the promises, to wit, *their freedom*, I shall speak a little unto these two, the first thing shall be to point out unto you the way how a Christian may win to the distinct up-taking of the freedom of the promises; and then I shall from thence presse some duties.

And in short, as to the first, we conceive that a Christian may win unto the distinct up-taking of the freedom of the promises, by these Considerations. 1. Let a Christian cast his eye upon the sweet rise, and spring, or fountain of the promises, and there ye will see their freedom shining most clear: for what is the fountain of the promises? Is it not the boundlesse and everlasting love of Christ: this is clear, *Deut. 7. 7.* where God giving a reason of all the great things that he had performed for them, he setteth down the rise of it, *Because I loved you*, saith he: and again the ground of this is, *Because I have loved you*, there being no reason of love, but love; and it is clear, *2 Sam. 7. 26.* where

## Great and precious Promises. 51

where David having received many precious promises, hee setteth down the rise of all these in that verse, *For the words sake*, saith he, *and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these things to make them known to thy servant.* And it is clear, *Ezek. 17. 8.* where God calleth the time of entering into Covenant with them, *a time of love*; that love it was eminently shining in that day when God did condescend to Covenant with them: And hence yee see in Scripture, that the promises they are called by the name of mercy, *Micah 7. 20.* *To perform the mercy to Abraham, which is the Promises*, and they are so called, because mercy and boundlesse love is the sole fountain and spring of all these promises. Secondly, Consider the persons who have right to make use of the promises? Must not the promises be free when the proclamation is upon these terms, *Rev. 22. 17.* *Whosoever will, let him come*, there is nothing to give you a right to the promises, but only a willingnesse to embrace them, if yee will, yee may take them. And, thirdly, yee may read the freedom of the promises in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promise: Christ giveth to the Believer strength to perform that condition: It is known that Faith is the condition of the promises, and it is certain Christ giveth a Believer that condition as well as hee giveth him the promise, *Philip 1. 29.* *To you it is given to believe*, and *Eph. 2. 8.* *It is the gift of God*: It is impossible for a Christian to perform the condition, except Christ who

## 52 Great and precious Promises.

is surety for him did perform it. Fourthly, Ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the time when the promises are accomplished, it is often at such a time, when the Christian hath been, and is under no very spirituall frame. Hence yee will see in *Ezek. 16. 60, 61.* that when the promises are accomplished, then God requireth confusion and blushing of face, because of their former wayes: and *Ezek. 36. 31.* when the promises are accomplished, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them to remember their own evil wayes, and their doings that were not good; yea, hee will have them and all the world to know, *it is not for their sakes that he doth this*; therefore he commandeth them to bee ashamed and confounded for their own wayes, or the posture they were in when he accomplished his promise: And if there were no other thing to speak the freedom of the promises, but the trysting of the accomplishment of them with such a frame, it were more then sufficient: But besides this, see *Dauids practice, 2 Sam. 7. 8.* hee readeth the freedom of the promises from his own imperfections, *What am I (saith hee) and what is my fathers house, that thou shouldest have brought mee hitherto?* And even in the same Text, there is an Emphasis in that word, *to us, Whereby are given to us*, as if the Apostle did say, to prove that the promises are gifts: I can bring no other argument so strong as this, *They are given to us.* Fifthly, Yee may read the freedom of the Promises, if yee will consider and take up the infinite sub-

ness



## Great and precious Promises. 53

ness and all-sufficiency of the *Promiser*, that there is nothing without himself that can perswade him to give such promises. Hence yee will see, *Gen. 17. 1.* when hee is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, hee putteth it still in the Frontispiece of the Covenant, *I am God all-sufficient*, as it were, to put off all thoughts of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might bee perswaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himself, that could be the ground and rise of such promises. And there is that, lastly, from which yee may read the freedom of the promises, if yee consider the greatnesse of these promises: if they were of a lower nature; then were it lesse to bee wondered, if merit should come in to plead for it self: But when a Christian shall compare himself, and the greatnesse of the promises together, hee cannot but then sing that blessed song, *These are the gifts and donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers house that thou hast brought me hitherto.*

Now the second thing that wee purposed to speak to, is, to presse some duties upon you from this, that the promises are free, and wee shall lay before you these three. The first, That since the promises of God, are free, then as you would not destroy your own souls, bee much in making use and application of the Promises: Are not the promises your life? Did not all the Saints that went to heaven before us go to heaven, living upon the promises? There was not a step of *Abrahams* life, but hee walked with  
a pro-

## 54 *Great and precious Promises*

a promise in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but hee took comfort to himself from the promises; and I shall remove these two mistakes that are incident to Christians in the application of the promises, even from this ground, that they are free.

The first is this, There are some Christians that will not apply the promises, because they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own basenesse: so that when wee presse you to believe the promises, yee reject this counsell, because yee consult with your own infirmities. This was the practice of *David*, *Psal.* 22. 4. *Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and were delivered: but hee durst not trust in thee the 6. verse, But I am a worm, and not a man, I am a reproach among the people.* And it is that same divinity that is in these dayes, when we presse you to believe the promises, because of the great cloud of witnesses that have gone before you, that believed the promises. O say yee, if I were like *David*, and *Abraham*, I would believe the promises; but truly *David* said that same, that lived before you, if I were like my fathers, I would believe the promises, but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would say to you these two words. 1. Are yee inferiour or short unto *David* in holinesse, or necessities? Wee do not question but all of you will answer, wee are not inferiour to *David* in necessities, but in holinesse; Then say wee, if ye be not inferiour to *David* in necessities,

say,

city, then make use of the promises: for as we cleared the last day, necessity giveth a right in making use of the promises. 2. I would say, I am certainly perswaded, that sensible necessity would cut short many of our formal debates, in closing with the promises, necessities (as ye use to speak) hath no Law, and necessity hath no manners. Let mee say that to you who will not close with the promises, that if yee were under sensible necessity, if Christ should forbid you to close with such a promise, ye would close with it though hee forbid you, as the woman of *Canaan* did, there is nothing but sensible necessity will overcome it: necessity never disputes its right, for it goeth over the belly of such a dispute, it presently maketh use of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly, There is that other mistake amongst Christians in believing the promises, that they want the qualifications annexed to the promises, and therefore they dare not believe the Promise, especially that promise of closing with Christ, they think they are not under such a deep measure of humiliation, of sorrow for sin, nor under such lively apprehensions of the excellency of Christ. And I shall say but these six things unto these that will not close with Christ, because they want qualifications, or at least, have not these qualifications after such a way. First, Let mee tell thee (O Christian that thus disputes,) go between the first steps of a Christians way to heaven and the last, and see if yee can behold a grave upon which this is written,

## 56 *Great and precious Promises.*

written, Behold here lieth a man or a woman that came to Christ to imbrace him, and hee would not receive them; Did yee ever behold such a grave as this? And why then do ye so much dispute? Will ye take a trial of Christ whether hee will refuse you if yee come, and if hee shall refuse you, sure I am, he will do that which he never did to any before you. The second thing I would say to such, that the want of such degrees of such things, ought not to be a ground of your not closing with Christ; for if yee had these qualifications that yee require, yee would maintain that same dispute that yee do now; for when we desire you to close with Christ, ye answer, that your sorrow is not come to such a height as it ought, nor is your humiliation come to such a height, as ye pitch for your self to come to. O Christian, if yee come to ten times more, and yet ten times more, yee would have that same dispute then which ye have now: and the ground of it is this, the more that a Christian have real sorrow, he will oftentimes be the more in the apprehension that hee hath not sorrow. Thirdly, If yee want the qualifications that are required in these that should close with Christ in the Covenant of promise, then come to Christ to get these qualifications. I would only ask at you, think yee to spin sorrow for sin out of your own hearts; Think ye to spin humiliation for sin out of these wretched breasts of yours, yee must come to Christ for sorrow, as well as ye come to Christ for life. Fourthly, All the qualifications that

## Great and precious Promises. 57

are annexed unto that promise of closing with Christ, and coming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, then the qualification of these that ought to come: Yee read such a command as that, *Come unto mee all ye that are wearied and heavy laden.* O say yee, I am not weary, and I am not under the burden of sinne, therefore I cannot come. I will tell you what is the meaning of that command; Christ inviteth these who have the greatest unwillingnesse, to come and get willingnesse: But withall, it sheweth this, none will come to get rest from Christ, but these that are first weary; and that this is the Lords method of working, first, to make weary, and then to ease; but no such matter in his Word, That first, wee must have a wearinesse of our own making, or else hee will not receive us: now but when yee come, yee will be weary, and hee will receive you. Fifthly, let mee say to you who thus disputes, make your want of qualifications the very ground of your closing with Christ. I shall but in three places let you see this strange arguing of Faith in closing with the promises: There is that, *Psal. 40. 11, 12. Let thy truth continually preserve mee,* that is, let thy promises be accomplished and made lively unto mee, which are my preservation: and would yee know the ground and reason that hee annexeth unto this; For saith he, *Innumerable evils encompassed me about, they have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He maketh his

## 58 Great and precious Promises.

his very want of qualifications, the ground of his closing with the promise, and seeking the accomplishment of it. And there is that second expression which is most wonderfull, *Psal. 25. 11. David prayeth for the accomplishment of that promise, Pardon my sinne upon that same very account, Because it is great.* And I shall give you a third place in which the arguing of Faith is most mysterious, *Exod. 33.* compared with *Exod. 34. 9.* In the first place, God desireth the accomplishment of that promise, of going up amongst that people: And the ground hee giveth of it, is, *Because, saith hee, yee are a stiff necked people.* And chap. 34. verse 9. when *Moses* is praying for the accomplishment of that promise, *That God would go amongst them;* he taketh that same very argument out of the mouth of God; *Go up amongst us; For, saith hee, wee are a stiff necked people:* God said he would not go up because they were a stiff necked people, and *Moses* desireth him to go up because of this. And there is this, lastly, that wee would say to you, that so much dispute; If yee would have these qualifications that yee want, yee would study to close with Christ by Faith; Would ye have sorrow for sin? then believe; Would ye have high thoughts of Christ? then believe: Would ye have humiliation? then believe; for believing is a mother grace unto all these.

The second duty that we would press upon you from this consideration that the promises are free, is, That when the promises

## Great and precious Promises. 59

are given to you, and are accomplished, ye would study to be denied to any merit in your selves, which ye may suppose to be the rise of the giving or accomplishment of the promises. There is nothing that a Christian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinit love, there is not a conviction that tryeth a Christian, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not one real sigh for sin, but it is the fruit of infinit love; there is not one blink of the precious countenance of Christ, but it is a fruit of infinit love; there is not the least degree of hatred against sin, but it is the fruit of infinit love; there is not the least promise that is accomplished unto you, but it is the fruit of infinit love: so that upon all our receipts from God, there is reason to sing that song, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee both belong the glory*: And therefore, I would presse this upon you, O Christians, reduce all your mercies unto the fountain, and there sit down and pen songs of everlasting praise to him. Will ye but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promise, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels and tender heart of Christ: his heart is the fountain of all our mercies, and they sweetly stream out of that precious fountain; so that if ye had no other thing to commend your mercy from, but that it is a gift of the heart of Christ, ye may take it in your arms upon this account, and solace your selves with it.

The last duty that we would presse upon you

## 60 *Great and precious Promises.*

you from this consideration, that the promises are free, is this; Ye would be studying to close with Jesus Christ that is promised and freely holden out to you in the Gospel; O sinner of eighty years old, O sinner of sixty years old, O atheists of forty years old, and O sinner of twenty years old and downward! I do here invite you, as the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, to embrace Christ freely offered in the promise; yea, I do invite you by all the virtues of that noble Plant of *rendown*; by that everlasting love that dwelt in his precious heart, by all the sufferings and wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, and by all the blessings and joys of heaven, and by that love that ye owe unto your precious and immortal souls, that ye would come and embrace him freely offered to you in the Gospel. And for the further pressing of this, and for clearing of the way of your closing with him, I shall first propose some Gospel mysteries, and sweetly agreeing contradictions, (if so we may speak) held forth in Scripture. 1. *Come and buy Christ, and yet buy him without money*; that is, come and receive Christ, and ye shall have as unquestionable a right to him as if ye had bought him, that is to buy without money; ye have nothing to commend you to Christ but necessities, and necessities bidden you go, and Christ biddeth you come, why then will ye sit this call? 2. What a Gospel mystery is that, *Ye are to buy Christ, and Christ is above price*, there is nothing that we can give to buy that pearl



## Great and precious Promises. 61

of greatest price, and yet we must buy him : then the meaning is, come, and buy Christ by faith, and by forsaking of your idols, this is all the price that he doth require for himself; and so he requireth nothing of you but what he himself doth give, or what is both your duty and advantage to forsake, and which is no gain for him to receive : Christ is not enriched by your hearts, and by giving of your consent to him. 3. This is a Gospel mystérie, that *we are to buy without money and without price*, and yet *to buy with a price*, according to that word, *Prov. 17. 17.* there is a price put in the hands of fools, to buy wisdom, and what is the meaning of that, to buy with price, and buy without price ? It is in short this, though Christ be offered to you in the Gospel freely, ye must not sit down, but be active in closing with him; What is the price that Christ requireth of you ? even this, that ye would forsake your soul destroying idols, and that ye would forsake your former evil wayes, and take hold of the present opportunity for embracing him. And O ! cursed shall the heart be that will not embrace Christ; O but to have him one hour in our arms, it were well worth ten thousand Eternities of the enjoyment of all things that are here below; ye would never open your arms again to another lover, if once ye had him *between your breasts.* O but a sight of him that now is the eternal ravishment of all that are above, would transport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration, above

## 62 Great and precious Promises.

above all expression. Fourthly, There is this Gospel mystery by which we would presse you to imbrace Christ; *A Christian must buy Christ, and yet he must have him freely.* Is there not an inconsistency, do you suppose between buying and having freely? But I would say this to clear it, Christ is both the seller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer; Christ he presenteth himself unto your hearts, and he desireth to sell himself, and he perswaderth and freely enableth you to buy him: I will tell you what Christ doth, he standeth without our hearts, and within our hearts, he standeth without and knocketh by the Word, and he standeth within and openeth by his Spirit; Christ he both commandeth, and he obeyeth, both within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The second thing I shall say to perswade your hearts to take Christ freely promised and offered unto you, shall be this; Will you consider that there is willingness in the heart of Christ to take you. I shall give unto you these six things that speaketh out Christ his willingnesse to receive you. First, Doth he not command you to come and receive him? and if ye could multiply objections throughout eternity, why ye should not close with Christ, ye may cut them all asunder with this knife, *This is his Commandment*: And doth he not command you, *Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour*: And *Isai. 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the water.* Secondly, Hee doth regra-

and deeply resent it that ye will not come. I think Christ never weeped so bitterly, as that day when he weeped over *Jerusalem*, that they would not embrace him, *Luke 19.* *41.* *If thou, even thou, at least, in this thy day, had known these things that belong unto thy peace: And John 5. 40. Yee will not come to me that ye may have life.* O what think yee can be the rise of this, that Christ should sorrow because yee will not give up your hearts to him; doth hee increase his gain when yee give him your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endure that madnesse in you, that ye should forsake your onely gain. Thirdly, Would you do Christ a joyfull turn, and make his heart glad? Embrace him; This is clear, *Luke 15. 5.* that when hee findeth the sheep that is going astray, *He returneth rejoycing.* Fourthly, I say no more unto you, would you make all the Persons of the blessed Trinity to rejoyce, would yee make all the Angels of Heaven to sing, would yee make all the Saints that are round about the Throne to exult for joy; then give your hearts up to Christ, and close with him in the Covenant of promise; according to that word, *Song 6. last vers. Return, return O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee.* Four times that command is repeated, *return,* and the great argument with which he backeth it, is, That all the Persons of the Trinity may rejoyce, *That we may look upon thee.* Fourthly, Consider but how he hath condescended to give himself at a very low rate: What will yee give

## 64 Great and precious Promises.

give for Christ? O sinners, what will ye give for him? Would yee give the world for Christ? I will tell you what yee will get Christ for, ye will get him for a very look, *Isa. 45. 22. Look unto mee, O all yee ends of the earth:* And think yee not that is a matchlesse mercy, that the thirty three years sufferings of Christ, all the pains and tortures of his heart, his being under the unsupportable wrath of an offended God, the fruit of all that should be yours for a look. Will ye deny that to Christ, Oh, do yee ever think to finde a more down-coming market? Yea, fifthly, doth not this speak an admirable willingness to have you, hee is to give you that look. It is impossible for these cursed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Christ a look, and therefore he hath Promised to give that to us, that we may give to him, *Zeck. 12. 10. They shall look to mee,* that very look yee are to get from Christ, and ye see it is within the compasse of a promise. Lastly, That speaketh Christs willingness to receive and take you, that he doth not take the first refusal. O Christians that are now in Christ, if Christ had taken an hundred refusals from you ye should never have been in heaven, but he waiteth for an answer, and doth not take us at our first word: according to that word, *Song. 5. 2. I am wet, saith he, with the drops of the morning, and my locks with the dew of the night:* Hee was long knocking at her hearr, and stayed a long time there patiently, suffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I would only pose you, think yee that

*Great and precious Promises.* 65

If one of the richest of you were suing a very poor woman, and shee refused you so many times, would your proud hearts submit to take her? And yet how often-times hath the precious heart of Christ submitted to many affronts, and refusals that wee have given him: I think if it were possible, Christians would wink when first they behold Christ upon the day of their espousals: For suppose their wil be a great dispute between shame and love, desire and confusion; shame will make you to close your eyes, because ye have oftentimes undervalued that Prince, and yet love will not let you close them; desire will put you to look, though reflecting upon your former wayes, will make you blush and be ashamed.

Thirdly, To perswade you to receive Christ in the offer of his free promises, I shall but say these three words and close. Look to these excellent gifts that Christ bringeth with him, he bringeth Justification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? Hee bringeth Sanctification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? Hee bringeth joy with him, and is not that an excellent gift? Hee bringeth the love of God with him, and is not that an excellent gift? Hee bringeth patience under sufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? But why should I name what hee bringeth? Hee bringeth himself and all things, and what could ye have more? O but for one saving sight of his face, it would make your hearts lay down your enmity that you have maintained

## 66 Great and precious Promises.

tained so long. 2. O Christian, that ye may  
 close with Christ, do but remember the hap-  
 pinesse that yee will have in imbracing him.  
 I told you not long since, and now I put you  
 in mind again: There is a sixfold crown which  
 shall bee put upon your head; Would you  
 have long life, then come to Christ, and ye  
 shall have a crown of eternal life: Would ye  
 have glory? then come to Christ and ye shall  
 have a crown of glory: Would ye have know-  
 ledge of the mysteries of God? then come to  
 Christ, and he shall crown you with know-  
 ledge: Would you have an eternal felicity  
 and an uninterrupted happinesse, then come  
 to Christ, and ye shall have an immortal  
 crown: Would you have holinesse and  
 justification, then come to Christ, and yee shall  
 have a crown of righteousness; yea, he shall  
 put a royal crown upon your head, a crown  
 of pure Gold; and then that word shall be  
 accomplished to the full, *Zech. 9. 16. They shall*  
*they be as the stones of a crown lifted up*  
*and as an ensign upon the land.* O what a day  
 think yee will it bee, when Christ shall hold  
 your crowns upon his hand, and shall put  
 them upon those heads never to be removed  
 again, here we are often put to sigh  
 that lamentation, *The crown is fallen from our*  
*heads, woe unto us for wee have sinned,* but  
 there shall be no more sin to make our crowns  
 to rotter. 2. I must tell you, There is a  
 fourfold sorte of apparel that yee shall be  
 clothed with ere long: ye are now clothed  
 with heavinesse, but then yee shall be clothed  
 with the garments of praise; And did ye  
 ever

e may ever know such a robe as that? Is it not a  
 e have more excellent robe then the robes of Kings  
 him and Emperours in the earth, to bee cloathed  
 at you with praises? Many of them are and shall  
 which for ever cloathed with infamy and shame:  
 ld you. Yee shall be cloathed with change of ray-  
 and ye ment, and shall be brought unto the King in  
 ould y payment of needle work. O poor Lasse and  
 e she poor Lade that sitteth upon the dung hill,  
 know that knows not what it is to have change of  
 some apparel, yee shall have it in that day, when  
 know Christ shall solemnize the Marriage with  
 elicity you, ye shall misken your self. O Christian,  
 n come yee knew your self never so well, ye will  
 mortee forced to cry out, *O ' is this I? Is this I*  
 nd say *that am now made perfect through his comeli-*  
 ee shasse. 3. Ye shall be cloathed with the gar-  
 he she ments of immortall glory, yee that have your  
 a crow undation in the dust, and dwell in the houses  
 shall be clay, yee shall then bee cloathed with these  
 . The excellent robes of immortality, and cloathed  
 sted upon with your house from heaven. And lastly,  
 at a day e shall bee cloathed with the garment of  
 all ho spotlesse righteousness of Christ. O such a  
 shall p majestic walk as ye will have, when ye shall  
 remove ve a scepter in one hand, and a palm in  
 igh on e other, these robes put upon your back,  
 from and these crowns upon your heads, and then  
 ed, b all bee walking through these streets that  
 ur crow paved with Gold. 3. I shall give you  
 here is s word to thinke upon, That there are  
 shall be e things that shall be your exercise in hea-  
 cloathed. 1. Yee shall be constantly taken up in  
 e cloath dering: If it be not presumption for us  
 d did y think a little; What is the exercise of  
 eve D Christ

## 68 Great and precious Promises.

Christ and the Saints that are above, we conceive it is this, Christ is wondering at their beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty, Christ is looking upon them, and they upon him; and is it not true, that if Christ be now ravished with one of our eyes, Song 4. ver. 9. much more shall he be ravished when both our eyes shall be given to him, and shall eternally behold him, without going a whoring after other lovers. 2. Ye shall be continually in the exercise of praise, joy and light shall be flowing in, and admiration and praise shall be flowing out eternally, ye shall then sweetly warble upon the Harps of God, and shall cry, *Hallelujah* unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, there shall be no discord there; there is a sweet and beautifull harmony amongst all these spiritual and heavenly Musicians. O but to hear them, it were a heaven, though we had not that blessed lot as to sing with them. 3. Ye shall be continually taken up in the exercise of love: Faith is your predominant grace while ye are here, but Love shall be your predominant grace when ye are there. Is it not a myserie to take up these sweet emanations of love and delight, that shall passe between Christ and you? ye shall be folding Christ, and Christ shall be in folding you. 4. Ye shall be continually beholding him. I think it is hardly possible for the Wife to remember her Husband in heaven, though she loved him as her own heart, they will all be taken up in beholding him that sitteth upon the Throne, they will think it too low an ob-



to be taken up with looking upon another in these relations: all will be ravished beholding him, and one another in him, and for him. O the blessed exercise of these that are now entered within that City, and within these Gates, whose name is praise. 5. Ye shall be continually taken up in beholding, ye shall be alwayes knowing, and yet never able to comprehend the endless mysteries and perfections of Jesus Christ. O such a study! Is it not pleasant alwayes to be studying Christ? and will not these things perswade you.

And now but a word more to these that will not have this free offer: If yee will not embrace Christ and take him, let me tell you, I would not bee in the stead of that person for ten thousand worlds, if yee will not embrace Christ and take him for your portion, the stones of the wall of this house will bear witness against you, and they shall have a tongue to speak against you, that yee have been invited to take him, and would not: how long that day is approaching, and drawing near, when the Atheists and refusers of Christ they shall change their faith, they shall change their love, they shall change their fear, and they shall change their joy; and they shall change their mind, ye shall change your mind yee that are refusers of Christ; for I know there are many that think they have closed with Christ, who never did close with him; that faith shall flee away, and ye shall believe the contrary: yee shall change your love, or at least, your opinion of your love: ye think yee love Christ, but yee do not im-

70 *Great and precious Promises.*

brace him; I will tell you what will be your exercise, and I can tel you nothing so terrible. Christ shall eternally hate you, and ye shall eternally hate Christ, there shall be a mutual hatred betwixt you two for evermore. *2* That dreadful word, *Zech. 11. 8.* it shall there bee accomplished to the uttermost, *My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred mee.* And ye shal change your fear, for now though ye fear not God, nor reverence man, yee then the horreur of God shall make you shake a leaf, and ye shall change your light and your judgement. Ye do now undervalue Christ and thinks him of nothing worth; when Christ is presented unto you, *there is no beauty wherewith yee should desire him:* But, O think on the day when Christ shall sit down in the clouds, and ye shall see his beautifull face, every one of which shal be able to captivate your heart, if they were then capable to be ravished with the sight. O what will be your thoughts of him? And if the blessings of a crucified Saviour come not upon you, then the eternal, unsupportable vengeance of Christ shall light upon your heads that would not condescend to take him: ye shall be cursed in your life, ye shall be cursed in your death. and ye shall be cursed after death; What say ye to this? Are ye content to take him! ye might blessing the day that ever ye were born, if yee could once come to close with Christ. Now he that hath the keys of the house of David, that can open your hearts to give him entry, we desire to give praise.

S E

## SERMON IV.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**T**Here are three most glorious and excellent gifts that God hath bestowed upon man, there is that comprehensive gift of heaven, *Jesus Christ*, who is so called, *John 4. 10.* and sure such a gift as that, ought in some sense to blind our eyes, and make us look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The second royal Gift that the Lord hath given, is the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant, which are given to us thorow him: A Christian that is united unto him by the blood of Faith, he may write this above the head of every promise of the everlasting Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of *Faith*, which is that grace that maketh use of the former two: and wee conceive, that our little making use of these three excellent gifts, is the great occasion and cause why these four most sad and lamentable evils have befallen us. The evil of a silent conscience, that though we be profound to commit iniquity, and do

## 72 Great and precious Promises

do love a reward under every green tree, yet our conscience doth not speak nor reprove us; and if at any time they do speak; yet there are some that are so possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, they can neither hear what God doth speak, nor can they hear their conscience. 2. The evil of a silent rod, we know not the voice of our rod, and who is he that hath appointed it; God doth not now open our ears to discipline, nor seal up our instruction. 3. There is that evil of silent mercies, the mercies that we receive of God, we understand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, speaking to us in an unknown tongue? and yet we may say, there is not a rod nor a mercy a Christian meets with, but it hath a voice, if we did understand it. And lastly, there is that evil which hath befallen us, and alas, this is the capstone of all; a silent God, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cries, but turneth about the face of his Throne, covering himself with a cloud in his anger, so that our prayers cannot passe through. Alas, may not each Christian of this time cry out, Call mee no more Naomi, but call me Mara, because the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. In short, I think there are these two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of Israel. First, That we live without sight of God; And secondly, that wee live without sight of our selves, and all this, because wee live without a sight of these precious Gifts, Christ and his Promises.

But now to the words; We told you, that

## Great and precious Promises. 73

in them there were these four things holden forth concerning the promises. 1. The original and fountain of the promises, in that word, *Whereby, or by whom*: 2. The properties of the promises which we told you, were these four. The first was, that the promises were free, holden forth in that word, they are *Given*; all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the noble gifts of God. The second (of which we are to speak at this time) is this, that the promises of the Covenant they are *unchangeable*, which is imported also in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed without repentance; And as to this: 1. Wee shall prove the truth of the point; and for this end, consider that place, *Numb. 23. 19.* which was a part of *Balaams* song, *Hath hee not Spoken it, and will hee not also do it? Hath hee said it, and shall it not also come to passe?* and *Psal. 89. 34.* *I will not break my Covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth*: and the point is clear also, from the name that the promises getteth in Scripture, are they no called the *sure mercies of David*, *Isa. 55. 3.* and are they not sometimes in Scripture called *Truth*, as wee may see from *Micah 7. 20.* Thirdly, The nature of the Covenant proveth it; in that it is called *an everlasting Covenant*, and sometimes a *Covenant of Salt*, because that Covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrifaction: And fourthly, It may be likewise shown from the constant experience that the Saints have had of the

## 74 Great and precious Promises.

unchangeablenesse of the promises. This *Joshua* taketh notice of, *Chap. 23. 24.* where when he was a dying, *There hath not failed* (saith he) *one thing of all these good things that God hath spoken*; and hee is so confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that verse: and hee taketh notice of it, *Josh. 21. 45.* where hee hath the same expression again, *There hath not failed* (saith he) *one thing of all the good things that God hath spoken*: and this *Solomon* hee took notice of, *1 King. 8. 56.* *There hath not failed one thing that God hath spoken unto us by Moses*; and indeed, there is near six thousand years experience that preacheth this truth, *the promises are unchangeable*, so that wee may now say, *The word of the Lord is tried as silver is purified in a furnace of earth not seven times*: If there had been any falshood in the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant, six thousand years triall should have brought it to light; but doth not every one of the cloud of witnesses that have gone before us, leave this testimony upon record, *Faithfull is he that hath promised, who will also do it*, his promise is with the night and with the day, it cannot bee altered, the ordinances of heaven continue to this day, much lesse can this Covenant of love be broken or altered, only wee would have you taking this Caution by the way, that there are some conditional promises that God passeth unto his people, which in the depths of his spotlesse wisdom hee doth not accomplish unto these who

## Great and precious Promises. 75

ver fulfill the condition ; such was that promise that he gave to the *Israelites* in the land of *Egypt* of their possessing the land of *Canaan*, who yet died in the wilderness : And hence is that strange word, *Numb. 13. 34.* *Ye shall know my breach of promise, saith the Lord*, which is a word spoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpose in God, but only shewing that because they did not believe, and so fulfill the condition of the promise, therefore it was not to be fulfilled personally to them.

The second thing that we shall speak to upon this, that the promises are unchangeable, shall be to propose these six golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableness of the promises is built. And the first of them is the omnipotency of God, that there is nothing that he hath promised, but he is able to effectuate and to bring to passe, Therefore, *2 Cor. 6. 8.* when God had been passing many excellent promises, he strengtheneth their faith with this, *Thus saith the Lord God Almighty: And no doubt, Where the word of this King is, there is power, and who can say unto him, What dost thou: O misbeliever of the precious promises of the Covenant; be ashamed to cast up your eyes to heaven above, or to the earth beneath; we think the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may speak out that to you, do not misbelieve God, but trust in him, That is wonderfull in counsell and excellent in working.* The second is, the wisdom and infinite counsel of

D 5

God

## 76 *Great and precious Promises.*

God, hee hath not only complear ability to accomplish the promise that hee hath given, but hee hath the depths and treasures of knowledge, by which hee hath contrived the way of the accomplishment of such a promise: Hence is that word, 2 Sam. 23. 5. *that the Covenant is well ordered*, which speaketh out the wisdom of God: and then that word is subjoynd, *the Covenant is sure* yea, the Covenant of Grace is such a thing that there is so much of the arte of heaven so much of infinite wisdom shining in it, that it is called *the counsel of God*, Heb. 6. 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counsel.* The third golden pillar, is, the *infinite love of God*; that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accomplish the promises, yet he will take an argument from his own love to make out such a promise to us; there is sometimes (if not alwayes) nothing in us, but that which may speak forth delayes of the accomplishment of the promises; but when God can bring no argument from us, he can bring an argument from his own love, as *Dent. 7. 7, 8.* where giving a reason of the accomplishment of many promises, and of his love to them, *I loved you, saith he, because I loved you*; there being no reason that can bee given for love, but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeablenesse of the Promiser*, that he is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever, and without all alteration and shadow of change: Hence yee may see, *Exod. 34. 14.* when God is repeating many precious promises unto *Moses*, Hee (as it were) strengtheneth



## Great and precious Promises. 77

strengtheneth Moses saith with this, *I am,* saith he, *that I am*, which wee conceive to point forth the unchangeablenesse of God, that what he hath said, he will certainly accomplish in its own time, and though the vision do tarry, yet at last it shall speak. The truth is, *The faithfulness of God*, and that hee is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make good what hee hath spoken. Love, it maketh the promises, the faithfulness and power of God accomplisheth the promises, and the infinite wisdom of God chooseth the most fit time for the performing of them. Hence it is said, *Psal. 119. 89, 90. Thy word Lord, is for ever settled in heaven*, and the ground of it is in the following verse; *For thy faithfulness is unto all generations*: Hence you may see, that oftentimes when God is making promises to his own, he putteth to that word, *I that speak in righteousness*, *Isa. 6. 19.* and *Isa. 63. 1.* O! must not the promises be unchangeable that are made by the Father who is the God of Truth? Must not the promises be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son, that is truth it self, and the faithful Witnesse, and men? Must not the promises be unchangeable that are applied by the holy Ghost, that is the Spirit of Truth? And must not the promises be unchangeable that are made known unto us by the Gospel, that is the Word of Truth? Was there ever any who should leave that upon record of God, that he was unfaithfull in the accomplishment of his promises. O what a clear sight of the faithfulness

## 78 Great and precious Promises.

fulnesse of God shall a Christian get, when he shall be standing upon the outmost line between Time and Eternity, then he will see God faithfull in accomplishing all his promises unto him from first to last. The last golden pillar, is, *The justice of God*, His justice, it now putteth him to accomplish his promises, mercy and righteousness have now kissed each other: Hence is that word 1 Joh. 1. 9. *He is just and faithful to forgive*. So that now the accomplishment of the promises, it is not only an act of love, but is an act of justice also: We confesse indeed love and mercy maketh the promises, but justice and truth also putteth God to the accomplishment of them: Hence is that word Micah 7. 20. *To perform the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham*: Why is it mercy to Abraham, and it is truth to Jacob? It is in short this, because mercy made the promises to Abraham, but truth did accomplish the promises to Jacob?

The third thing that we shall speak to from this, That the promises are unchangeable shall be, to presse these six duties upon you from this point.

O Christians and Expectants of Heaven, who have Christ in you, the hope of Glory, rejoyce and be exceeding glad that the promises are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is pressed from that ground, *Heb. 6. 18. That by two immutable things we might have strong consolation*: There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Christian from this, that the promises shall be accomplished in

their

their own time. We conceive that the word *unchangeable*, it is engraven upon the head of many a Christians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our promises? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our blessedness? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we shall have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable*: And we conceive, that if these two were believed, the truth of the promises, and the unchangeableness of the promises, a Christian might walk through this vale of tears with joy, and comfort himself in hope.

The second duty we would presse, is this, that ye would sursease and give over your disputings and carnal reasonings about the accomplishment of the promises, since the promises of God are *unchangeable*, ought not we with this to silence misbelief, and all that blind humane reason can say: This is pressed, *Heb. 6. 16.* *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all strife.* Gods confirming of his Covenant by an oath, it ought to cut short the disputings of misbelief; And here give me leave to point out a little these grounds upon which it is that Christians doth so much dispute the accomplishment of promises: and to let you see how all these grounds may be answered from these six pillars that were given of their *unchangeableness*.

The first is, When dispensations seemeth  
to

## 80 Great and precious Promises.

to contradict the truth of the Promises, the promise it speaketh one thing, and dispensations seem to speak another: and this is the occasion that oftentimes Christians cry out, *Doth his promise fail for evermore.* This is clear from the practice of *David*, 1. Sam. 27. 1. when dispensations were upon the top of the accomplishment, and truth of the promises, then misbelief it ariseth as a Champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul:* And wee conceive, that dispensations contradicting the truth of the promises, was the occasion of his speaking that word, *Psal. 116. 11. I said in my haste, all men are liars.* And I would only say to you that dispute the truth of the promises upon this account, that dispensations contradicteth them: Do but consider this: God in his way is not like unto you: Would ye know the time when the promises are nearest their accomplishment, it is then when we can least see that they are to be accomplished, the promises are never nearer their performance, then when wee think that they are furthest off from it: And therefore let the faith of the omnipotency of God, uphold your spirit under such a debate, then let dispensations speak what they will, yee may answer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him, there is nothing too hard for the Lord.* I grant this may try the strength of the strongest faith, yea, we finde it hath made the best to stagger when they had no probabilities to tell them that the promise shall be accomplished: this was the ground

## Great and precious Promises. 81

ground of *Sarahs* misbelief, *Gen.* 18. 12. that when she heard she should bear a son in her old age, she laughed within her self, and did, as it were, mock at such a promise : and this was the ground of *Moses* his misbelief, *Numb.* 11. 21, 22. hee did not see a probability that such a multitude should be fed with flesh, and therefore hee did call in question the truth of that promise : this was the ground of the misbelief of that Lord that is made mention, *2 King.* 7. 2. and this was the ground of *Zecharies* misbelief, *Luk.* 1. 20. But I would only say to you that do so much consult with probability in the exercise of your faith, these two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God, this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah* in the 14. vers. of that 18. Chapter, *Is there any thing too hard for God ?* And, 2. Faith is never in its native and spirituall exercise, till once probabilities contradict the truth of the promise, then faith it is put upon the stage, and then faith doth act ; but as long as faith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the trial of the strength of faith is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is their much disputing of their interest in God ? Sometimes a Christian will believe a promise, and before the accomplishment of the promise come, their hope will be darkened, their interest in Christ will be obscured, and then they do quite their faith in adhering to the truth of that promise. These  
two

## 82 *Great and precious Promises.*

two are joynd together, want of the faith of our interest, and want of faith of the accomplishment of the promise, as it is clear from that word, *Psal 77. 8. Is his mercy cleane gone.* There is disputing of his interest, and presently this is subjoynd, *Doth his promise fail for evermore.* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient records of heaven, and can seal this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved he is mine*, it will be a hard, and a difficult task for him, if not impossible to believe the promises.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, their mistaking the way how the promises are to be accomplished, There are some that suppose that when ever they close with a promise by faith, there is no more but to enter to the possession of such a promise; but do not mistake it, between your believing the promise and the accomplishment of it, there may bee sad and dark dayes interveening, according to that word in *Mark 10. 30.* where Christ passing great promises to his Disciples, Hé, as it were doth adde, do not mistake me that ye shall have these promises without trouble and affliction, *Ye shall receive (saith he) an hundred fold in this life with persecutions.* A Christian when he believeth the promises, he must resolve to have a winter before the spring time come, wherein the promise shall bud and flourish.

The fifth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, when the pro-  
mises

## Great and precious Promises. 83

promises are long in their accomplishing. A Christian when first hee meeteth with a promise, he will cry forth, *O I believe*, but when time is taken for the accomplishment of it, when his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope beginneth to languish and give over; yea, sometimes Christians they fall in this fault, when they believe a promise, they fix a day for the accomplishment of it, which if God do not keep, but go over; then they immediately cry forth, *What is my strength that I should wait, and what is my confidence that I should prolong my dayes*. This is clear in the practice of Abraham, where the promise of having a numerous seed being given to him, Gen. 2. 12. the long time before that promise was accomplished in part to him, was the occasion of his misbelief, that hee vented, Gen. 15. 3: *O Lord, what wilt thou give me, since I go childelesse*: But yee must know, that before the vision shall speak, there is an appointed time that ye must wait, according to, 1 Pet 5. 9, 10. *After yee have suffered a while, then the promises shall be accomplished, and yee shall be made perfect*.

The sixth ground upon which Christians call in question the accomplishment of the promises, is, The consideration of the greatness of the thing that is promised, when they compare it with their own worth and deserving, then they begin to dispute, *O shall such a thing be, shall unworthy I, shall sinfull I, shall self-destroying I, shall I that am lesse then the least of his mercies, receive*

## 84 Great and precious Promises.

ceive the accomplishment of such a mercy. This we may suppose was one ground of *Abrahams* misbelief, *Gen. 17. 18.* when he cryed forth at that same time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promise of an *Isaac*, *Or that Ishmael might live:* He thought an *Isaac* such an excellent mercy, that he could not without presumption, expect the accomplishment of that promise. And *Zach. 8. 6.* this was the ground of their misbelief which God doth sweetly obviate, *If it be wonderfull in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these dayes, should it also bee wonderfull in mine.*

The last ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promise is, When in the time between their believing and the accomplishment of the promise they fall into some grosse iniquity, this maketh them exceedingly debate, whether the promise shal be accomplished unto them for since they have transgressed the Covenant of God, and have broken their purposes and resolutions, they cannot suppose God will abide faithfull to them, and once accomplish his promises unto them, and the only way how to answer this dispute, is to look to the faithfulness of God, and use that word, *2 Tim 2. 13. Though we believe not, yet God doth abide faithfull, he cannot deny himself.*

And now to shut up this second duty the we presse from the unchangeableness of the promises: I shall only say these two words unto you, 1. Assure your selves of this



at these accomplishments of promises that  
 come not through the lively exercise of  
 faith, doth loose much of their sweetness,  
 much of their luster, and much of their ad-  
 vantage: Sometimes a promise will bee ac-  
 complished unto a Christian, when he hath  
 not been much in the constant lively exer-  
 cise of Faith in believing such a promise;  
 but then the disadvantage that attendeth  
 such a one, are not easily expessed: How  
 often may hee cry out, *The Lord was in this  
 place, and I was not aware*: How little of  
 God doth hee see in it, how short is hee in  
 praises and rendering to the Lord according  
 to the good hee hath received? How negli-  
 gent in improving or keeping the mercy,  
 and how loath to lay it out for God, when  
 hee saith, *The Lord hath need of it*: and many  
 things more of this kinde which may presse  
 us to be steadfast in believing. And, 2. O  
 dispute lesse, and believe more, what pro-  
 fit shall yee have of your disputings; and  
 yee would produce all your strong argu-  
 ments why yee should not believe the pro-  
 mises, yee may drown them in this immense  
 depth, *God is unchangeable*. Let mee say  
 but this farther, There are three most re-  
 markable changes in a Christian, in his ma-  
 king use of the promises: First, Sometimes  
 hee will believe the promises and make  
 application of them, and ere many hours  
 to about, hee will misbelieve that promise  
 which presently he believed. Will not some-  
 time a Christian in the morning cry out, *I  
 am my beloveds, and my beloved he is mine,*  
 and

## 86 Great and precious Promises

and ere twelve hours come, they will change their note and cry out, *My hope and strength is perished from the Lord*: Sometimes a Christian in the morning will cry out *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved*, and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out, *Thou hast hid thy face from me, and I was troubled*. Secondly, Sometimes a promise will bee to a Christian *sweeter then the honey & the honey comb*: Sometimes a Christian would die and live upon the promise: Sometimes the believing of a promise will bee to a Christian *as the vales Anchor for a door of hope*, that will make him to sing, and yet ere many dayes go about, he may come to that same very promise, and it will prove tastelesse to him as the *white of an egge*; so that he may cry out, *O that it were with mee, as in months past, and in the ancient times*: And O where is the sweetnesse that was found in such a promise? O it is gone, it is gone, and I am left desolate. Thirdly, Sometimes when a Christian will be believing upon a promise, and resting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) see much light and clearnesse in that promise, hee will rake up the *deep things of God* that shinerh therein, and at another time hee may come to the same promise, and it may be dark to him, so that his light hath vanished: and sometimes the joy of a Christian in the promise will be gone when his light that hee had in it, may remain with him. A Christian may come to the promise, and finde his ancient light, yet

not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore if yee would have the promises alwayes sweet unto you, pray over them, pray that God might breath upon such a promise, and make it lively to you.

The third thing that wee would presse upon you from the unchangeablenesse of the promises, is that which by proportion yee may gather even from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable*; these two are conjoynd, yea, *Joshua* seemeth to infer the unchangeablenesse of the threatnings from the unchangeablenesse of the promises, Chap. 23. 14. compared with verse. 15. and these two are conjoynd, *Zeck.* 8. 14, 15. *That as I thought to punish you, and it hath come to passe, so I have thought to build you up, and it shall come to passe.* And I would from this desire you to stand in awe, lest you come under the lash of the unchangeable threatnings of God; for know, that as God is unchangeable in the promises, and there is not one word in all the everlasting Covenant that shall not bee accomplished; so likewise know, there is not a curse in all the Book of the Covenant, but it shall bee accomplished in its time: And know this likewise, that the day is coming when that sad word that is in *Hos.* 7. 12. shall bee accomplished, *I will chastise them as their Congregation hath heard.* And O yee that live in this place, if all the threatnings that your Congregations hath heard, shall bee accomplished in their time, yee may rake up the last words of *Baalams* song, alas, *Who shall live when God shall do these*

## 88 Great and precious Promises.

*these things:* And therefore, since the threatenings of God are unchangeable, as also the promises, life and death is set before you, and either yee shall bee the Object of the unchangeable threatenings of God, or yee must be the Object of the unchangeable promises of God: And therefore, I would from this charge you, that as you would not be helpfull to the destruction of your own immortal souls, you would not undervalue the threatenings that ye hear in your Congregations, since there is a declaration past, that the threatenings in your Congregations shall be accomplished.

Now there is that fourth duty that we would presse upon you from this, that the promises are unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiser*; let this commend the *Promiser*, let this constrain your hearts to delight in the *Promiser*. O what a blessed dispensation of love is this, that an unchangeable God should make unchangeable promises unto changeable Creatures. If the promises of the Covenant of Grace were as changeable in their nature as we are changeable, there should not one of us go to Heaven; but know, it is the blessed design of love, and it hath been a blessed practice of the infinite wisdom of God, that when he hath to do with changeable creatures, he will give them unchangeable promises. And I would once invite you again, that you would come near and embrace this unchangeable *Promiser*: I shall speak these five words that may perswade you. First, Christ is easily to be gotten if yee will take him,

## Great and precious Promises. 89

him, ye will get Christ if ye will but hear; for one listening of your ear to his voice ye shall get him: according to that word, *Isa. 55. 3. Hear, And what of that, and your soul shall live*; Is not this to get Christ at an easie rate: and as we spake before, ye will get Christ for a look, and is not that an easie rate, *Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be saved*: Have ye a desire to take Christ, ye shall get him for that desire; according to that word, *Isa. 55. 1. Ho every one that thirsteth, let him come and he that wills let him come*: Will ye not consent to take him, ye shall have him, and what can you have at a lower rate then this: Shall never your cursed hands take the pen and put to your name to the blessed contract of Marriage? Shall never these cursed hearts of ours cry forth, *Even so I take him*, and do promise to live to him, and to die to him. O strange, will ye not do it, upon what terms would the world have Christ, is it possible to have him without a consent to take him? Oh if ye would but open to him, he would condescend to come in unto you, and to sup with you, and ye with him; do ye but stir to open, Christ hath the Keyes in his own hand, and he would help you to open. O what if Christ the precious Gift of Heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, that branch of Righteousness shall be despised, being offered upon so easie terms; then cursed eternally shall be that person that thus undervalueth Christ, it had been better for him that he had never been born:  
Cursed

90 *Great and precious Promises.*

Curſed ſhall ye be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death, all the curſes of the Perſons of the Trinity will light upon you yea, believe it : O wiſe that haſt a believing husband, in the day that the great ſentence of eternal excommunication from the preſence of the Lord, ſhall bee paſt againſt the undervaluers of Chriſt, a believing husband will ſay amen to that ſentence, even to his wife that did thus undervalue that Noble Plant of renown: and the wife upon the other part will ſay with hearty conſent, amen to that ſentence againſt the unbelieving husband, and the father to the ſon, and the ſon to the father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would preſſe upon you from this, That theſe promiſes are unchangeable, that ye would be perſwaded to make the promiſes your portion and your inheritance; What can ye want that will choiſe the promiſes for your portion? I know, our curſed eyes doth not love to make inviſible promiſes, and that inviſible crown, and an inviſible God our portion, we look to walk by ſight, not by faith. But oh if you knew once what it were but to claim a relation to Chriſt ! Did ye once know what it were to have but Chriſt a moment between your breſts, ye would cry forth, O ! *who would not love him who is the King of Saints* who would not be content to quite all things that they might get Chriſt that noble pearl of price.

And there is this laſt duty that we would preſſe upon you from this, That the pre-

miſe

*Great and precious Promises.* 91

promises are *unchangeable*; read a lecture from  
his, O Christian, even your misbelief; God  
hath confirmed his everlasting Covenant  
with an oath, with the *Bloud of his Son*, by  
the two great broad Seals of heaven, the Sa-  
crament of *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*;   
and what doth all these confirmations speak  
but our dreadfull misbelief, and that wee  
know not what it is to be resting on a naked  
word of promise. I shall say no more, but  
desire that yee would consider and take no-  
tice of these three. First, Yee have been  
solemnly and often invited by the Ambassa-  
dors of Christ to close with him, and to  
take him for your Husband and your Lord,  
and will you consider presently, that all  
the Angels in heaven, and all that are about  
the Throne, and the three most glorious  
most blessed Persons of the Trinity, that they  
are witnesses, and shall bee to your dissent.  
And are there not many here whose hearts  
could never be brought up to give a hearty  
consent to close with Christ that is the great  
promiser, and who hath laid all the bonds  
that heaven or earth could contrive to gain  
others hearts unto himself: O precious  
Christ, what could hee do to perswade us to  
love him which hee hath not done; and yet  
what may bee your name, which is in *Ephes.*  
2. *Children of disobedience*. Or as the  
word is, *Children of Imperswasion*, wee can-  
not bee perswaded. Secondly, I fear if  
Christ Himself would come from heaven  
and invite you, and say, here am I, imbrace  
me, there are some here who would close  
E  
nor

## 92 *Great and precious Promises.*

not only their eyes, but their ears, they would close their eyes lest the beauty of Christ should allure them, they would close their cursed ears lest they should be gained and captivate by the sweet enchanting voice of that blessed Charmer, when he should charm so wisely. And, lastly, wilt thou tell mee, O Christian and expectant of heaven, what a day shall it be when all the unchangeable promises of God shall bee accomplished? What a day shall it bee when that promise shall be accomplished, *Ye shall see him as he is*? What a day shall it be when that promise shall bee accomplished, *Ye shall bee made like unto him*? What a day shall it be when that promise shall be accomplished, *ye shall know as yee are known*? Are ye not longing for the day of the full accomplishment of the precious promises of God, when yee shall sit down and comfort yourselves in the eternal and unspeakable fruition of them? O let us long and wait till the day shall bee when that voice shall be heard in heaven, *That the mysteries of God be finished*, till the day when that voice shall be heard in heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go yee out to meet him*. Oh how willing are wee to leave a world. And how gladly would wee take up our rest on this side of *Jordan*. I think if this were the night that that blessed voice were to be heard in heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go yee out to meet him*; some, if not many of the Christians (that are so indeed in this time would cry forth, *Oh spare*  
little



## Great and precious Promises. 93

little that wee may recover strength, before wee  
go hence and shall bee no more. Are yee not  
longing to bring the King over Jordan, and  
to bring him home to your self, and to have  
your heart brought home to him? O blessed,  
blessed are these that are above; Is not the  
voice of these that shout for victory heard  
amongst them? Is not the voice of these  
that sing for joy heard among them? Job  
doth not now any more complain, Why dost  
thou make mee to possesse the iniquities of my  
youth, and setteth a print upon my heels? Da-  
vid doth now no more complain, Why doth  
thy promise fail for evermore, but rather doth  
sweetly sing, How is thy promise fulfilled for  
evermore? Heman doth now no more com-  
plain, While I suffer thy terrors I am dis-  
tressed, but rather cryeth out, While I feel  
thy comforts I am ravished. The voice of  
mourning is now sweetly gone away, and  
the voice of Hallelujah and of eternal prais-  
ing of him that sitteth upon the Throne is  
now heard in the place of it: O such a day  
that shall never admit of a following night.  
to him that is upon his way, that will  
come, and shall come, and shall not tarry,  
we desire to give praise.

## SERMON V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**T**Here are three cardinal and excellent Graces that are exercised and taken up with the precious promises: there is the excellent grace of Faith, that believeth the truth and the goodnesse of the promise; there is the precious grace of Hope, that with patience waiteth for the accomplishment of the promise, and doth stay untill the vision speak: and that noble grace of Love, that loveth the thing that is promised; and taketh exceeding much delight in the Promiser. If we may be allowed to speak so, we think these strange revolutions and times we live in, are another Ecclesiastes, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptinesse of all things that are below God: And wee do indeed conceive that it is the great design of God in the darkning of our pleasant things, and in making every gourd to wither, under the shadow which we use to repose our self, and in diminishing all the gods of the earth, to bring his own to delight themselves in this visible Tre

Treasure, the promises of the everlasting Covenant, and in him who is the substance of them; and that since all things else are declared to be vanity, we might choise these, as our own portion for ever.

At the last occasion that wee spake upon these words, we were speaking unto the properties of the promises; and wee told you that there were four of them holden forth, 1. *The freedome of the promises.* 2. *The unchangeablenesse of the promises*, of which two wee have spoken unto you; and now there remains other two to be spoken to, to wit, that the promises are exceeding great, and that they are exceeding precious, a sweet and excellent, though a rare conjunction, of the greatnesse and goodnesse here kissing one another, preciousnesse and highnesse linked together by the bond of Union: And we shall speak unto these two properties together, and shall clear a little this thing, in what respects the promises of the Covenant maybe called exceeding great and precious: And we conceive in short, they may be called so in these eight respects. First, They are exceeding great, in respect of the great price that was laid down to purchase them, there not being a promise of the everlasting Covenant above the head of which this may not be engraven in great letters, *Here is the price and purchase of blood*: And no doubt this ought highly to commend the promises, that they are bought at so infinite a rate. Must they not be great and precious things that so wise a Merchant did lay down so in-

96 *Great and precious Promises.*

finest a treasure for the purchasing of them.  
 2. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in respect of those great and precious things that are promised in them. Is not godliness a great thing, and this is within the bosome of a promise; Is not heaven an eternal enjoyment of God a great and precious thing? and yet this lyeth within the bosome of a promise? Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our victory over Idols, great and excellent things; and yet all these are treasured up in the promises. 3. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in respect of the great advantage that redoundeth to a Christian through the enjoyment of them: the promises of the everlasting Covenant (if so we may speak) are the Penicill that draws the draughts and lineaments of the Image of Christ upon the soul, it is the promises of the everlasting Covenant by which we are changed from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord, and as Peter doth here speak, the promises are such things whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature. 4. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in respect of that near relation that they have unto Jesus Christ; What are all the promises of the Covenant of Grace? Are they not streams and rivolets that flow from Jesus Christ; Christ is the fountain out of which all these promises do spring, and can this fountain that is sweet in itself send forth any bitter waters? must they not be precious things that have such a noble descent

them descendent? as to be streams of love flowing  
 at and out from the Father to the Son, and from  
 d pre him unto us, as the pouring out of the  
 n. Joyment upon the beard of Aaron which ran  
 s with down the head unto the skirts of his gar-  
 heavens. 5. They may be called exceeding  
 at and precious promises, in respect they, or ra-  
 within ther Christ in them are the object of precious  
 knowaith: What is the meat upon which faith  
 ormir doth feed? is it not upon the promises of  
 eat and the Covenant, and Christ the kernel of them:  
 e crea What are these things that faith taketh so  
 maybe much delight in, and is supported by? Is  
 in re not the promises of the Covenant:  
 found 6. They may be called exceeding pretious,  
 ment on that they are the things that guideth and  
 ng Co leadeth us to precious Christ. There is not  
 Pensil promise within the Book of the Covenant,  
 uts o our, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud  
 t is the voice, O come to Christ; The promises are  
 ant b indeed the Star that leadeth us unto the  
 ry, a house where Christ doth ly, and there is no  
 s Pete accessse unto Jesus Christ but by a promise,  
 thing Christ is to be found there, for he dwells  
 e divin within the bounds of the everlasting Cove-  
 ceeding ant, and there he will try st with his people,  
 on tha and be found of them. And, 7. They may  
 are a be called exceeding precious, in respect that  
 Grace he Saints have found such sweetnesse, and  
 at flow uch unspeakable delight in these promises.  
 ountai Did not David find a great sweetnesse in the  
 spring promises when he cryed forth, *The words of*  
 n it fe by mouth are better unto me, then thousands of  
 hey no old and silver? Did he not find much sweet-  
 a nobl esse in the promises, when he was con-  
 e scent

98 *Great and precious Promises.*

strained to cry out, *Thy Law is sweeter unto me, then the honey and the honey comb?* David in a manner was put to a nonplus, to find out any suitable similitude and significant resemblance, to point out the sweetness of the promises; though we may see the Christians of this time in a spiritual fever, they have lost their spiritual taste, so that they may say, if wee may allude unto that word, *2 Sam. 19. 25. I am this day fourscore years old, and cannot discern between good and evil, can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink.* They know not what it is to be overcome with the sweetness that is to be found in these excellent streams of divine consolation. Lastly, The promises may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high and matchlesse account of them. Hence that word here rendered *Precious* may likewise be rendered *Honourable*, which speaketh forth that there is nothing that hath so much of the esteem of a Christian as the promises. Would ye put wisdom, or riches, or honour, or what ye will in the ballance with the promises, they would cry forth, what should I profit to gain all these if I lose the promises. We shall say no more of this, but that the promises are indeed that Apple, the eating of which would make us in some respect, (and in humility be it spoken) *as God knowing good and evil*: The promises are these things that doth elevate the soul unto a divine conformity with God. And oh that this might be the fruit of them: the promises are as cords let down to soul

## Great and precious Promises. 99

sinking in the myrie clay, and in the horrible pit, do but lay hold upon them, and ye shall undoubtedly be drawn up, and he shall set your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.

Now we come to speak of the third thing in the words: which is the advantage and unspeakable gain that floweth to a Christian through the promises, holden forth in these words, *That by them ye might be made partakers of the divine nature*; which words doth not hold forth that there is any substantial change of our natures unto the essence of God; but onely it holds forth this, that the soul that is taken up in believing of the promises, they arise unto a likeness and conformity to Him in Holinesse, Wisedome and Righteousnesse. And as to these advantages that come to a Christian through the promises: 1. We must lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him through believing the promises, and in making application of them.

And the first is, That they do exceedingly help and promove that excellent and necessary work of mortification: This is clear from the words of the Text; As likewise from 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holinesse in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the promises have upon Sanctification, may be shown unto you in these three. First, They lay upon a Christian a divine bond and obligation to study holinesse,

## 100 Great and precious Promises.

that since Christ hath signified and testified His respects unto us, in so ample and large a way as to give us such precious promises we ought to endeavour to study holiness which is that great reward of love that he seeketh from us for all things that he hath bestowed, and we receive, and this is the meaning of that, *2 Corinth. 7. 1.* Secondly The strength and furniture of a Christian for fulfilling and accomplishing of the work of Sanctification, lyeth within the promises. Are not the promises of God unto a Christian, as *Samsons* locks, in which their great strength doth ly; and if once they cut themselves off from the promises through misbelief, their strength doth decay, and they become as other men. Where must the Christian go to for strength? Is it not to the promise: Is it not the Name of the Lord? Yes, this is the strength of a Christian unto which he must resort continually. And thirdly, the promises of God they hold forth that unspeakable reward that attendeth the Christian that shall study holiness. There are several promises of the everlasting Covenant that cryeth forth to the Christian, to him that overcometh will this promise be accomplished, to him that overcometh shall this truth be fulfilled, and this doth exceedingly provoke a Christian to wrestle with his discouragements he meeteth with in the way, he burieth all his anxieties within the circle of his immortall Crown, which he hopeth for, and seeth in the promise, and his hope maketh him dispence with his wants.



his expectation maketh him overcome his fears, and his looked for joy maketh him to dispence with his sorrows.

The second advantage, is, That the faith of the promises do help a Christian to a spiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withall, maketh him delight in the performance of it: This is clear from *Sam. 7. 27.* where *David* believing the promises, it is subjoynd, *Hee found in his heart to pray that prayer unto God*; and if any will look unto the words of that prayer, they will see them running in a heavenly and spiritual strain, speaking him one much acquainted with God, and under most high and majestick apprehensions of his Glory, as is clear also, *Psal. 119. 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning and cryed*; and as if *David* had said, would you know what made me thus fervent and diligent in prayer, And it was that, I hoped in his word; and hence it is, that he hath so many prayers in that *Psalme*, all were occasioned through the faith of the promises: As for instance, when *David* cryed forth, *Quicken me according to thy word, be mercifull unto me according to thy word.* And we conceive, the faith of the promises helpeth a Christian in his prayer to exceed these four Divine ingredients of that duty. It maketh him pray with faith: when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promises, then he venteth his prayer with much confidence of hope, according to that word, *Psal. 65. 3.* where ye may see a man believing, and praying when he is believing.

102 *Great and precious Promises.*

ing, and expressing his confidence most strangely in these words. *As for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away*; It is not said, thou wilt purge them away, or we desire that thou should purge them away, but *thou shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of Faith, and the boldnesse of Faith: A Christian that believeth the promises, he can take the promise in his hand and present it unto God, and say fulfill this promise since thou wilt not dery thy Name but art faithfull. 2. It maketh a Christian pray with much humility, for when he doth understand that there is nothing that he hath but it is the fruit, and accomplishment of a promise, he doth not boast as those that have received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: this is clear, *Gen. 32* 10. where we may see *Jacob* speaking to God with much humility, and in the ninth verse he is speaking to God with much Faith. And 3. It maketh a Christian pray with much love: Would you know the great ground that we are so remisse in the exercise of love in prayer, it is, because we build not our prayers upon the promise. And 4. It helpeth a Christian to pray with much fervency; when was it that *David* cryed to God? Was it not when he was believing the promise that past to him of old, we would not plead with God with such remissnesse if we did believe the promises that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, That the faith of the promises doth sometimes uphold a Christian

Christian under his spiritual disersions and ten-  
 tations. Is it not certain, that sometimes  
 he hath been ready to draw that conclusion,  
 I am cast out of his sight, and shall no more  
 behold him in the land of the living? when  
 a promise hath been born in upon his spirit,  
 hath supported him and made him to change  
 his song, and to invert his conclusion. This  
 is clear from *Psal.* 94. 18. when I said, my  
 foot slippeth, there is the conclusion of misbe-  
 lief and despair, yet thy mercy, O Lord, did  
 hold me up, there is the gate at which faith  
 doth bring in consolation, not from bygone  
 experiences onely; but certainly from that  
 which he found in some precious promises  
 that was born in upon his spirit: Many  
 excellent cords of love hath Christ let down  
 unto a soul, when they have been going  
 down into the depths, and the weeds have  
 been wrapt about their heads: It is clear  
 likewise from *Psal.* 119. 81. *My soul faint-  
 eth for thy salvation:* as if David had said,  
 I am in hazard to give over my hope, and to  
 break my confidence: And would ye know  
 what was it that supported me under such  
 an estate, *I hoped in thy word:* Hath not this  
 oftentimes been the song of a Christian in  
 their darkest night, *In the multitude of my  
 thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my  
 soul:* Faith will see a morning approaching  
 in the time of the greatest trouble; and no  
 doubt that promise that upholdeth a Chri-  
 stian in their doubting and most misbeliev-  
 ing condition, the lively impressions of that  
 promise will remain a long time with him;  
 and

104 *Great and precious Promises.*

and when first it is born in upon their spirits, they will see no small love shining forth in carving out such a promise to suite with such a providence as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promise, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience and divine submission under our saddest outward afflictions: this is clear from *Psal. 27. 13. I had fainted unlessse I had believed to see the goodnesse of the Lord in the land of the living*; and from *Psal. 119. 49, 50. where David telling his exercise in the 49. I hope, saith he, in thy word*, Immediately he subjoyneth, *This is my comfort in mine affliction*, as if he had said, if I had not had the promises to be my comforters, I had sit alone and kept silence, and should have remained without comfort in the day of my adversity, and vers. 92. *Unlessse thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in my afflictions*; and we conceive in short, the influence which faith upon the promises hath upon the patient bearing of the crosse, may be shown unto you in these two particulars; First, Faith it is an excellent Prophet, that alwayes prophesieth unto us good things. Would ye enquire at Faith at your midnight of affliction, what is his opinion of God and of your own estate; Faith would sweetly resolve you thus, *Wait on God for I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance*. Faith knoweth not what it is to have a wrong construction of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a

Chri

Christians crosse: If sense, reason, and mis-belief interpret your crosse, they will make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become unto as an enemy, or as a liar, and waters that fail?* but if faith that noble Interpreter do interpret your crosses, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give me an expected end.* Faith letteth a Christian see a blessed outgate and issue of all the sad dispensations that he meeteth with. Faith, that is its divinity, I sow in tears, but I shall reap in joy, *weeping may be at evening, saith Faith, but joy shall come in the morning.* Secondly, It affordeth unto a Christian such soul refreshing consolation in the midst of their afflictions, that in a manner they forget their sorrows, *as waters that passe away*; this David doth divinely assert in Psal. 119. 50. *This is my comfort in mine affliction*: The faith of the promises are indeed that tree which if they be cast into our waters of Marah, they will make them immediately become sweet.

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promises doth help a Christian to a greater distance with the world, and to live as a pilgrime, as is clear from Heb. 11. 13. where these two are sweetly linked together, their imbracing of the promises by Faith, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims here on earth. And we shall show the influence that faith hath upon this, in these three. 1. It maketh a Christian see the end of all perfection here, and that there  
is

## 106 Great and precious Promises.

is nothing within this Glob of the World that *is not vanity and vexation of spirit*, Faith is that prospect through which a Christian hath most clear discoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrime. 2. It letteth a Christian see the endlesse perfections of heaven, and bringeth it within sight of that immense and everlasting hope, and this maketh him to live as a pilgrime, and to declare plainly that *he seeketh a Countrey*. And, 3. It doth exceedingly help him forward in that blessed work of weaning of affections from all things that are here; Would you know where a Believers heart is? It is in Heaven; would you know where *his thoughts* are? They are in Heaven; Would ye know where *his conversation* is? It is in Heaven; Would ye know where *his hope* is? It is in Heaven, his *treasure* is in heaven, and therefore his heart and his conversation is there, *And Christ in him is the hope of glory*: and indeed, more faith of the promises would constrain us all to subscribe that *Confession of Faith* that is in *Heb 11. 13.*

The sixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the promises, is, That it is the mother of much spiritual joy and divine consolation, and maketh a Christian to be much in the exercise of praise: this is clear from *Psal. 71. 14.* But *I will hope continually*, and then immediately is subjoynd, *And will yet praise him more and more*; As likewise from *Rom. 15. 13.* and from *1 Peter 1. 8.* If a man would have his way to heaven

made

## Great and precious Promises. 107

made pleasant, and while they are sitting by the rivers of *Babel*, would bee admitted to sing one of the songs of *Zion*, then ought they to believe the promises, and to choose them as their heritage for ever: and then hee may sing in hope, and praise in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the present: indeed when he looketh to his possession, there will not be so much matter of rejoycing, but when hee looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, hee may be constrained to cry forth, *Awake up O my glory, I my self will awake early.*

The seventh advantage is, That the faith of the promises is a notable mean to attain unto spiritual life: This is clear from *Isa.* 38. 16. *By these things, saith Hezekiah, do men live, (speaking of the promises) and in all these things is the life of my Spirit.* As likewise from *Psal.* 119. 50. *Thy word, saith David, hath quickned mee.* O what spirituall and divine life doth attend that Christian that is much in the exercise of Faith upon the promises: And what is the great occasion that our hearts are oftentimes dying within us like a stone, and wee are like unto those that are free among the dead? Is it not because wee do not make use of the promises.

Eighthly, there is that advantage, that faith of the promises, it maketh a Christian have an esteem of the thing that is promised: What is the reason that wee write this above the head of the great things of the everlasting Covenant, this is a *Zoar*, a little

little one ? Is it not because we do not believe ; great things sometimes to us have no beauty , and there is no comlineffe that appeareth in them why they should be desired ; but if we had so much faith as *a grain of mustard seed* , we would cry forth, How excellent are these things that are purchased to the Saints, and how eternally are they made up that have a right but to one line of the everlasting Covenant, *That is well ordered in all things and sure.*

And ninthly , The faith of the promise is the door at which the accomplishment of the promises doth enter in: according to that word, *Luk. 1. 45. Blessed are they that believe for there shall be a performance of these things that are spoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accomplishment of his promises , the vision should speak and should not tarry : And no doubt, a mercy coming to us as the fruit and performance of a promise , will make it an exceedingly refreshing thing ; When a Christian gerreth leave to sing that song which is in *Isa. 25. 9. Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will come and save us :* And when a mercy is the fruit and accomplishment of the promise , there is a beautiful luster and dye upon that mercy , which no arte could set on , but only the finger of the love of God . The smallest mercy then becometh a matchlesse mysterie of love, and the most matchlesse mysteries of love without the exercise of Faith , they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value



nor praise them. Faith maketh our thoughts to ascend, and misbelief makes our thoughts to descend, in relation to the mercies of heaven.

Lastly, Besides all these advantages, We have these two mentioned in the Text: 1. That by them we are partakers of the Divine Nature, and are brought up unto that blessed conformity with God, which we had lost in the fall. 2. That by them we escape the corruptions in the world through lust: I intend not particularly to open up the nature of these things at this time, because I am only to speak of the exercise of Faith in the promises. But O what excellent mercies are these to get on the beauty of the Image of God, and to get off these ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our souls. O how should this commend the promises unto us, that by faith in them, we do *all behold with open face as in a glasse, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same from glory to glory as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now that which, secondly, we shall speak of, shall be the advantages that result to a Christian from a spiritual observation of the Lords accomplishing his promises; for here ye see in the Text, the Apostle maketh an observation of these excellent things that are the fruit of these precious promises when they are accomplished. And the first advantage is, That it stampeth the soul of a Believer with most divine impressions of love: This is clear, Isa. 38. 15. where Hezekiah cryeth out, *What shall I say, he hath*

## 110 Great and precious Promises.

hath spoken it, and himself hath done it, being as it were, astonished and overcome with the apprehensions of the condescendency of God. He is put to a non plus, and to what shall say, *Psal. 41. 8, 9.* As we have heard (saith David) so have we seen in the City of the Lord of hosts, That is according to his promise, we have had suitable performance, and he subjoyneth, verse 9. that which was both their exercise and their advantage, We have thought of thy loving kindnesse, O God, in the midst of thy Temple; as it were, the observation of the performance of the promise made their thoughts wholly to bee taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promise, then eternity were sufficient to make a commentary upon. It is one wonder of condescendency, that God should oblige and bind himself to us by promises: and another depth of wonderfull love, that he should perform these bonds, and answer his words with performance.

The second advantage is, That the observing of accomplishment of promises doth bring in to the soul new discoveries of God: this is clear, *Exod. 6. 3.* where God thus speaketh to Moses: *I was known* (saith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of the Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah was I not known unto them, that is, by the Name of giving an accomplishment unto my promises, that Name was not discovered unto them, but should bee made known unto their posterity, in the day when*

## Great and precious Promises. III

is promises should passe unto performances, and hence it is also, that when the Lord is speaking of the accomplishment of great promises, he doth so often in the Scripture subjoyn that word, *Ye shall know that I am Jehovah, or the Lord*, Isa. 49. 23, 52. and 60. 16. and indeed we do daily find it so; for, is not every accomplishment of a promise, a new discovery of the *wisdom of God*, that shineth in the suitable tyming of the accomplishment of a promise: Is not every accomplishment of a promise a new discovery of the *faithfulness of God*, that hee will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth? And is not every performance of the promise a new discovery of the *love of God*, that hee desireth to magnifie his mercies above all his work, and a new discovery of the *power and omnipotency of God*, that can bring forth the performance of his promise, notwithstanding of all things that are in the way, yea, *make things that are not to bee, and bringeth to nought things that are.*

The third advantage is, That it helpeth Christian to have high apprehensions, and majestick uptakings of God: This is clear, *Tim. I 15* compared with *vers. 17.* where Paul closing with that promise, *That Christ came in the world to save sinners*, and beholding in the accomplishment of it, in himself, his heart (as it were) is elevated with him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be the honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.*

There

## 112 Great and precious Promises.

There is an Emphasis in that word, *Now*, as if Paul had said, I could never praise and exalt him till *now*, and I am so much bound to Christ that I will not delay this exercise one moment, *now* I will bless him, and it is clear from *Mic. 7. 18.* where the accomplishment of the promises that are there, made the Church cry out, *Who is like unto thee*, he became marchless unto them through the performance of the promises. And so we conceive that these who are much in spiritual observation of the performance of the promises, they will see precious draughts of the Majesty of God engraven upon them; so that they will be constrained to cry out, that hee above is mighty, that his Name is *Jehovah*, and in him is everlasting strength, upon which we ought to rely in our greatest straits.

The fourth advantage is, The observing of the accomplishment of the promises, will help a Christian when hee is redacted unto new straits, to be much in the exercise of faith upon God; his former experience will produce hope in his soul; for there is not one discovery of the faithfulness of God, but hath a voice, and cryeth out, *O believe him* who is able to give a clear being unto his word: This is clear from *Psal. 56.* at the close, *Thou hast delivered my soul from death*, saith David, and then he subjoyneth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling*: that is, I am certainly preserved, thou wilt likewise perform that word unto me. And from *Psal. 37. 2, 3.* he giveth that title unto God, *vers. 2.* that he performeth all things for him, and then he doth sub-

## Great and precious Promises. 113

Hee shall send from heaven and save mee;  
 and (by the way) the soul that can give God  
 that riddle and stile, *That hee performeth all*  
*things for them*, that soul must of necessity be  
 in a choise and excellent state: And the point  
 is likewise clear from 2 Cor. 1. 10. where  
 Paul saith, *God hath delivered me, and he doth*  
*deliver me*; and from hence he draweth that  
 conclusion of Faith, *And hee will yet deliver*  
*me*. We confesse sometimes our former ex-  
 periences of the faithfulness of God, they do  
 not support our faith when wee are redacted  
 into new difficulties, which is either occasio-  
 ned through the greatnesse of the strait that  
 we are now put to, (in our apprehensions)  
 above that which we were put to before; so  
 that though God did deliver us when we were  
*running with footmen*, yet we have no faith to  
 believe that hee shall deliver us when we are  
*about to contend with horses*: or else it is,  
 through the unfaithfulness of our walk, in  
 not answering the precious dispensations of  
 Christ in accomplishment of his promises, for  
 this maketh us that we cannot with boldnes  
 make use of his Word when we are brought  
 into a new strait, a guilty conscience is the  
 mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is, That the accom-  
 plishment of the promises doth occasion  
 much spiritual joy & rejoycing unto his own.  
 We told you, the giving of the promises occa-  
 sioneth joy, and when the promises travellet  
 to birth and bringeth forth, that occasioneth  
 much more spiritual joy: this is clear from  
 Psal. 28. 7. *The Lord is my strength and my*  
*shield,*

# 114 Great and precious Promises.

shield, my heart trusted in him, and I was helped: And he draweth this excellent conclusion from it, *Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth and with my soul will I praise him.* And we conceive, that sometimes, that God tryeth the accomplishment of the promises with some precious manifestation of himself to the soul, which maketh them to rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; but however this is the matter of a spiritual song, *The mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace are kissing one another:* Is it not a pleasant matter of a song to behold love making promises, and to behold faithfulness accomplishing them?

And the last advantage is, That the observation of the accomplishment of promises doth strengthen a Christians faith in his interest in God; so that now many disputings are silenced, and many questions now are out of the way, this is clear *Psal. 31. 21, 22.* David confesseth his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord had shewed his marvellous loving kindness in a strong city, then all his quarrelling was against himself, because he had quarrelled and did say in his haste, *I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

And now wee shall only speak a little more to some duties that wee would presse upon you, from that which wee have spoken. And the first duty is, That Christians would bee much in waiting for the accomplishment of the promises, and standing upon their watch-tower untill the vision shall speak. And wee shall only give you these to enforce

## Great and precious Promises. 115

1. It is commanded that you should do : this is clear from *Psal. 27.* at the close, where *David* presseth that duty very much, *Wait on the Lord*, saith hee, and if that be not enough, he will repeat that command in that same verse : *Wait I say on the Lord* : and no doubt the doubling of it speaketh not only advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, and the great necessity that wee have to go about it ; and that same word is repeated by *David, Psal. 31. 24.* *Bee of good courage*, which is that same, to wait upon the Lord. 2. These that wait patiently for the accomplishment of the promises, God will strengthen them to wait: this is clear from *Psal. 27.* at the close, *Wait on the Lord*, and when wee are *Hagar* like, casting away the childe of hope, hee will open our eyes, and give us refreshment, by which wee may bee supported under our disquietment, and hee shall strengthen thine heart : And there is this. 3. There shall be a speedy accomplishment of the promises: it is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promised, and thou hast believed, shall be told down to you, as it were, in one sum, principal and interest : as is clear from *Hab. 2. 3.* where hee positively asserteth, *That the vision will come, and will not tarry.* There is indeed a pleasant seeming contradiction in that verse, hee had said before, *that the vision would tarry*, and yet here he saith, *The vision will not tarry, but will surely come* : in which ye may see the divinity both of sense and faith, and that noble

F

CON-

## 116 Great and precious Promises.

contradiction that is between their assertions. *Sense* asserting that the promise doth tarry too long, and *Faith* crying out, it will surely come, it will not tarry; which is set down, 2 Pet. 3. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.* 4. Promises that come unto us through the most strong and lively exercise of Faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are most relishing and sweet, and these mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is somewhat pointed at in *Isa. 25. 9.* where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo, this is our God, wee have waited for him, wee will bee glad and rejoyce in his salvation.* their waiting and expecting of the promise to be accomplished in its time is there the fountain of their song and of their spiritual joy. I think sometimes a Christian is like that unbelieving Lord, 2 King. 7. 2. that though they meet with the accomplishment of a promise, yet they do not taste of the sweetness that is in it, because they did not believe the Word of the Lord,

The second duty that wee would presse from what we have spoken, is, That Christians would close with the promises for their everlasting inheritance, since the promises of the Covenant are exceeding great, and exceeding precious, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unspeakable. O! should not these things proclaim aloud unto us, *Close with the promises as your portion for ever.* I think, one that hath a right to the promises and hath entered himself heir unto the same



inheritance; he may sometimes rejoyce in  
 that threefold mystery of the Gospel, that  
 to a naturall man can hardly appear other  
 then a contradiction. 1. He may sometimes,  
*have nothing*, and yet *I possesse all things*;  
 or when hee looketh unto his being in the  
 word, hee is as poor *Lazarus*, having no  
 place whereon to lay his head; but when  
 hee casteth his eye unto his spiritual inheri-  
 tance, then hee beholdeth his treasures, and  
 is constrained to cry out, *I possesse all things*.  
 Sometimes hee may cry forth, *I am*  
*rich*, and yet *I am exceeding poor*; he may be  
 rich in hopes, and yet poor in his possessions.  
 There is much of a Christians treasure that  
 lieth in hope; hope is that thing that will  
 make the Christian sweetly quite all other in  
 comparison of that: that is the motto of the  
 Christian, *Spero meliora* which he holdeth  
 up in his flag, even in the greatest storm,  
 and at length hee findeth it true, that hope  
 maketh not ashamed. 3. Sometime the Chri-  
 stian will cry forth, *I am alwayes sorrowing*,  
 and yet *alwayes rejoycing*: when hee casteth  
 his eye upon himself, he will sit down and  
 water his couch with tears, but when with  
 the other eye he reflecteth upon Jesus Christ,  
 he will rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full  
 glory; a Christian can both weep and re-  
 joice at one time, and again hee can rejoyce  
 and weep: No doubt, the reflecting upon  
 the immense hope, and that everlasting  
 crown, will make a Christian rejoyce under  
 his disquietments and anxieties in the  
 world, he can look to the back of time, and

# 118 *Great and precious Promises,*

behold a glorious inheritance. A Christian hath the eye of an eagle that can behold and discern things afar off.

The third duty that we would presse upon you, is, To long for the day when all the promises of the Covenant of Grace shall receive their compleat accomplishment, and when ye shall be entered into the everlasting fruition of all these things wherein your blessedness lyeth. There is a threefold come that Christ speaketh to the soul that is united unto him, all which they sweetly obey. There is that first come, which is in *Matth. 11. 28.* *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.* And there is that second come, *Isa. 26.* *Come my people, enter into the chambers,* which is to entertain that excellent correspondency with him in troublesome times: And there is that third matchlesse come, when Christ shall say to his own in the day of their standing before the tribunal, *Come, O blessed of my Father.* Shall we say it, that if we had faith as a grain of mustard seed, we would cry forth, *Why tarryeth thy chariot so long in coming;* and did we rely, or made a high account of the matchlesse promises of the boundlesse Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away like the ships of desire.* I shall say no more but this, *Christ is gone up with a shout unto heaven, and shall come again with the sound of a trumpet, sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our God, sing praises.*

The last thing that we would presse upon you is, That ye would mark the time of the accomplishment of the promises. And as

his, I shall say but these : 1. That ordinarily the time of the accomplishment of the promises, is the time when sense, reason, and probability doth most contradict them : this is clear, *Ezek. 37.* in the fulfilling of the promises that were past to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were *as a valley of dead bones*, and their hopes were in a manner cut off for their part, from the 11. verse of that chapter, compared with the 12. And 2. That the time of the accomplishment of the promises, ordinarily is a praying time : this is also clear from *Dan. 9. 2, 3.* and from *Jer. 29. 12.* compared with the 11. vers. and the 10. thus saith the Lord, the time when he will visit them, and perform his good word to them, in causing them to return, it shall be a time when they shall call upon me, and shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them. And, 3. the time of the accomplishment of his promises, it is a time when our thoughts of the promises are high and large, when once we begin to value our mercies, this is a sign that our mercy is near, and it is bringing forth : However, it is our duty to wait on Him who can give a being unto his Word, and sweetly perform his promises. We ought not to limit infinite wisdom, nor to say unto him that is infinite in strength, *How can such a thing be?* but answer all objections of misbelief with this, God hath spoken it, and he will also do it, and drown all our objections of misbelief in that glorious and mysterious Name of His, *I am that I am.* To Him be praise.



## SERMON VI.

**Acts 26. 18.** *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

**W**Hen first we did begin our discourse upon the precious and excellent grace of Faith; We told you that we intended to speak of it under a twofold notion and consideration. First, As it layeth hold upon Christ for Justification; and of this we have spoken to you at some length, as ye have heard. Secondly, As it closeth with Christ for Sanctification; and of this we are to speak at this time; and have chosen these words to speak of it, which are a part of that excellent Oration and Discourse that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence. In which Oration and Discourse of his, ye may behold these four things eminently shining: 1. That Godlinesse and good maner are not inconsistent, nor contrary one to another: Therefore ye will see in the second and third verses of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a Courtly Orator: and believe it

there is more good manners to be learned by being seven dayes in the School of Christ, then by being seven years in all the Courts of France. This, secondly, that innocent Policy that he made use of in the deliverance of this Oration, which likewise doth appear in the second and third verse of this Chapter, where he endeavours to insinuate & ingratiate himself in the favours of the person before whom he had stood; I confesse, piety is the best policy that is taken up in intertaining piety, howbeit true policy may move in one orb and sphere with piety, and the one is not contrary to the other in some case. 3 This shineth in that discourse, even the spiritual boldness *Paul* had in giving an excellent confession of his faith, and the declaring him to be God, even *Jesus Christ* in whom he did believe; *Christ* witnessed a glorious confession before *Pontius Pilat* for him, and he would witness a glorious confession before *Agrippa* for *Christ*, that since *Christ* had not denied him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious *Christ* in this day: and this is from the beginning and all alongs. Lastly, This shineth in the words that *Paul* doth set forth, the matchlesse freedom & unspeakable riches of *Christ*, not onely toward himself in that he did cast the lot of everlasting love toward him; but likewise toward the Gentiles to whom he was sent as a Preacher, and that he did gloriously condescend to visit the dark places of the earth, and to have the morning Star, and the Day Spring from on high arising on the habitations of cruelty. And  
in

in this verse which we have read, you may behold these five glorious ends of the preaching of this everlasting Gospel, for attaining of which, Ministers are made instruments under God. The first is, to open the *eyes of the blind*, which in short is even this, to give those that are ignorant of God, the spiritual knowledge of the deep mysteries of the Father, and of the Son: So that from this, ye may see that the Gospel hath a kind of omnipotency in producing effects above the power of nature. The second, we may see in these words, to remove them from *darknesse to light*: Which importeth these two things. 1. The removing of persons from an estate of excellent joy. 2. The removing of persons from an estate of iniquity, unto an estate of holinesse, *darknesse* in Scripture pointing out sin, and *light* in Scripture pointing out holinesse. 3. The bringing us from under the power of Satan unto God, the making a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage, that these who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of Love; that those who were under the bondage of sinne, may bee under the sweet obedience of Christ, *whose yoke is easie, and whose burden is light*, *Matth. II. 30.* 4. That persons may receive the remission of sins, and the forgiveness of their iniquity; This is the great voice of the Gospel, come to a crucified Christ, come to a pardoning Christ, come to a glorified Christ, Christ hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himself in the other, and these are the great

motive

may motives by which he studieth to perswade us to come. And the last is in the close of the verse, that persons may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me, that is, that they may have a share of that glorious mansion, of that excellent Kingdome that Christ hath purchased, and hath gone before to prepare. And withall, in this verse as the words are set down, ye may see the excellent and orderly methode that the Gospel keepeth in conquering souls, & you may see these excellent allurements, these perswasive arguments that Christ holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were, Christ cometh not unto us clothed with the robes of Majesty, but clothed with the robes of Love and advantage, knowing that in this posture he shal most gain upon our hearts.

Now in speaking unto that last end of the preaching the Gospel, we shall only according to our present purpose, take notice of this one thing from it, (not intending to prosecute it as it is an end of the Gospel) but as a property of Faith: and it is that, Faith in Jesus Christ hath a noble and excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holiness, they are sanctified, saith he, through faith in me. We shall not stand long to clear this unto you, it is evident from *Act. 13. 9.* where the Apostle telleth us of purifying their hearts by faith: And likewise, *1 Tim. 1. 5.* where a pure heart and faith unfeigned, they are joynd and linked together: As likewise, *1 Job.*

3. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, b  
purifieth himself: All the Graces of the Go  
spel they are linked together by a golden and  
unseparable chain, so that he that obtained  
one, he shall obtain all; yea, more, all the  
graces of the Gospel, they have a mutual in  
fluence upon one anothers growth, so that  
we may compare them unto *Hypocrates* twins  
of whom it was reported, that they did  
laugh and weep together, and they did grow  
together: even so when one grace doth re  
joyce, the rest doth rejoyce with it, and  
when one grace doth mourn, the rest doth  
also mourn with it, and when one grace doth  
grow the rest of the graces of the Spirit they  
do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we  
shall insist a little upon: First, We shal  
shew you how faith hath influence upon the  
attaining of Sanctification, and this we make  
clear unto you in these respects.

1. In that it discovereth to the soul that  
matchless excellency, that transcendent beau  
ty, and that surpassing comeliness that is in  
Christ, which sight doth exceedingly per  
swade the soul to draw that conclusion, *What  
have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious  
sight of Christ, and acquaintance with him  
maketh us lose our acquaintance with our  
idols, and when once we are united unto  
Christ by faith, we break that union we had  
with them. And indeed, the want of the  
knowledge of that excellent comeliness that  
is in Christ, and of love to him, is the great  
occasion that the poorest dieties and idols



for promoting Sanctification. 125c

the world taketh up your hearts: did ye but once see him who is that glorious Son of righteousness, yee would be forced to put in your Amen unto that excellent confession of Faith, Eccles. 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity and vexation of Spirit.*

2. In that it is the grace that discovers unto a Christian the spotlesse holinesse of Christ, Faith doth not onely discover the beauty of Christ, but likewise his holinesse, and this doth make the soul fall in love with that excellent thing Sanctification. It is recorded amongst the first steps to sin and misery, that we desired to be as Gods, knowing good and evil; but certainly it is among the first steps to life and happinesse, when the soul desireth to be holy as hee is holy: And I suppose, this is the great ground that yee are not much endeavouring a blessed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the blessed Image of Christ, ye know not the beauty of holinesse.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jesus Christ, and draweth strength and vertue from him for the conquering of lusts, and in raising us up into a blessed conformity unto himself; when the Christian is weak; Faith is that noble correspondent between that emptinesse that is in us, and the fulnesse that is in Christ; Faith is that noble correspondent between that weaknesse that is in us, and that everlasting strength that is in him: Therefore there are two noble and excellent counsels of Faith: First, It counsels us not to lean upon our own strength: And, secondly, to have our recourse unto him whose Name is *Jehovah*

*Jehovah* that everlasting strength; And no doubt, if we were more taken up in employing Christ by faith, that prophesie should be accomplished, *I will make the feeble ones as David, and David as the Angel of God*: and when a Christian is most diffident in himself, then God should prove himself to be Almighty, and All-sufficient.

And, 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promises, and doth believe them: and believing of the promises bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*, according to that word upon which we were speaking, 2 Pet. 1: 4. by believing the promises, (that is the advantage of it) *We are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith also believeth the threatnings that are past in Scripture against sin, and the believing them hath an undoubted and strong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification: Faith strengtheneth a Christian against the committing of iniquity with these two words: that word, Rom. 6. 20. *Of soul (saith faith) commit not iniquity, for the wages of sin is death*: and that word, Rev. 21. last, *There shall in no way enter into the City, any thing that is unclean, or that committeth iniquity.* And be perswaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings, and of the promises that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord not easily broken, to restrain you from the acting of iniquity: And shall tell you briefly the ground why these cursed hearts of ours doth commit iniquity with

so little fear, and with so much delight, it is even this, because we believe not the threatnings of God, which shall be accomplished in their own season: for is it possible that if ye believed that word, *Rev 21. last. That nothing shall enter into the New Jerusalem that defileth or worketh abominations, or that maketh alie*; that ye durst not for a world adventure upon the committing of iniquity as ye do. And I shall only say to such that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming when they shall be constrained to cry out, *He hath spoken it, and he hath done it, & faithful is he*, there is not one jot nor tittle in the word of the Lord that shall fall to the ground: And believe it, God will be faithful in the accomplishment of his threatnings, as he is faithful in the accomplishment of his promises.

6. Faith discovereth unto a Christian the noble excellencies, and those spiritual dignities that are in that everlasting estate that is provided for the Saints in light; Faith (as it were) carrieth up the soul to the top of *Pisgah*, off which it is admitted to behold the *promised land*, and truly the seeing of these noble things that are provided for the Saints, cannot but make them study holinesse, since they know that there is an impossibility for one to attain to that estate without holinesse, because he had said it, *Without holinesse no man shall see God*. O then if once ye saw heaven, ye would be constrained to walk in that path of Sanctification, since it is the glorious way by which ye must walk in through

through the gates of that blessed City. But ye know, not the excellency that is there, it is a fancy and notion unto you: and that is the ground that ye do not study to conform your selves unto that blessed image of God. And I would only ask you this one question, Is it possible that such a delusion as this can overtake you, *as to think*, that ye who never studied holiness on earth, shall yet enter into heavens gates. I know there are some that say in their hearts, *I shall have peace though I walk in the imaginations of my own heart*: and many more, that suppose that they might fight and overcome, that they may quite the estate of nature, and be compleat in the estate of grace all in one day. But why will ye deceive your selves, *Can a nation be born in one day*; Or is there but one step between hell and heaven? O remember, though nothing be impossible with God, yet there was but one thief saved upon the crosse.

7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining of holiness in this respect, That it believeth the exceeding great advantages that are promised unto the person that studieth holiness: Faith believeth that word, *Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God*: Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of the excellent sayings, and maketh the Christian endeavour to attain unto a likeness and conformity with him, that so he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith discovereth unto Christians the sinfulness of sin, that is never done till once they

they be in the lively exercise of the grace of Faith. And I will give you these three grounds why faith compleatly discovereth the sinfulness of sin. 1. Faith letteth us see the person against whom we commit this sin, and that doth exceedingly aggrege sin; for when the Christian is admitted to behold God; and to see that matchlesse excellency that is in him; then (saith he) what a beast was I to offend such a glorious Majesty as He? What a fool was I to kick against the pricks; or to enter in the lists with such an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Christian see these excellent obligations of love that Christ hath imposed upon us; Faith letteth us see the ancient and everlasting love of Christ; Faith is that grace that letteth us see his sufferings; Faith letteth us see all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Christian to cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish one and unwise*: And no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the study of this duty, he would be lesse in contracting debt, and were you but seriously taken up in the study of these two great Registers. 1. The Register in which all the infinite acts of love are recorded. And, 2. That Register in which all your acts of offending precious Christ are written, ye would be astonished and ashamed to see so much forgiven you; and durst not sin any more; there ye would see infinite mercy desiring to rejoyce over judgement, and there ye would see the spotlesse riches of that transcendent grace that is in Christ.

3. Faith

3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second thing that we shall speak to concerning Faiths influence in the attaining Sanctification, shall be to enquire a little unto these things that hinder even Believers from attaining this blessed effect of their Faith; for some Christians there are that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of Faith, making use of Christ for Sanctification, and yet their making use of Christ by Faith, doth not weaken the strength of their idols (at least) to their apprehensions, neither yet raise them up to a conformity with God; so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*, and when they fight and doth not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope*.

The first ground of such a dispensation is, That a Christian is not constant in his actings of Faith, he will be strong in faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he will faile in that exercise, and this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith: For when faith hath gotten its advantages, they lose them through security and negligence: that is a command that should be continually obeyed, *Trust in the Lord at all times*: and no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the constant actings of Faith, he should sometimes sing that song, *I trusted in God, and I was helped*.

Secondly,

Secondly, The most part of Christians, they are not strong and vigorous in actings of their Faith, their Faith is exceedingly weak, and so they cannot bring forth these noble fruits and effects of Faith. If we were trusting in God with all our hearts, then that promise, *Psal. 37. 5.* should be accomplished to us, *Trust in the Lord, and hee shall bring it to passe.* Thridly, There is a strong heart conjunction and soul union between us and our idols: wee are joynd to our idols, and therefore we cannot be easily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war against them, there is a procurator within that cryeth, *O Spare this little one, or this profitable or pleasant one,* and this is ordinarily our practice, to spare the choicest of our lusts; so that our *Agags* may cry forth, *The bitternesse of death is past.* But I confesse, if that union were once dissolved, wee should then bee heard with greatest earnestnesse to cry forth, *O blessed bee the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight.* Fourthly, Sometimes a Christian layeth too much weight upon the actings of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith, but as an instrument to which Christ must bestow strength to conquer. Sometimes we think that faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand, but remember, Faith is but an empty thing without Christ: as ye may see, *Acts 15. 9.* where the *purifying their hearts by faith* is ascribed to the holy Ghost, so that the activity of faith is from him, and not in it self. Fifthly, A Christian doth not hate sin with

a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his lusts, and with these strong idols that are within him, but there is a secret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppose: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Christian; Sometimes his light will cry, mortifie such an idol, and yet his heart will cry, O spare such an idol; yea more, sometimes his heart will cry, mortifie such an idol, and yet his heart will cry, O spare such an idol: That is to say, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing. O! but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of sin, *Rom. 12. 9. Abhor that which is evil.* The word is in the Original, hate evil, as ye would do hell, that is: have perfect hatred to sin, O to hate iniquity as much as hell: and joyne that word, *Eph. 5. 11. Reprove the unfruitfull works of darknesse;* or as the word may be rendered, *Make out by unanswerable arguments* to your tentations, that you cannot embrace the unfruitfull works of darknesse, convince your tentations that ye cannot do it: As we suppose, it was a noble arguing of *Joseph* when he was tempted, *How shall I do this?* he put the temptation (as it were) to it: O temptation give me one ground why I should commit such an iniquitie. And certainly, if we were thus reasoning with our tentations, they should flee before us: But the truth is, we embrace the desire of our temptation upon implicit faith. It is a sad regrave; and yet I may not



ter it, O if men would but deal with God as they do by Satan, we never dispute the promise of Satan, and never examine these allurements he set forth, and yet we constantly dispute with God upon every thing. Sixthly, A Christian promoteth not in the growth of Sanctification, though in some measure exercising faith, because he hath not such a heart to holiness. If we did discover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being clothed with that glorious robe of the righteousness of Christ, and in having the sweet draughts of the Image of Christ engraven upon our hearts, we would have more victory over our lusts: There is a command for a perfect love to that which is good, and holiness in that same place, *Rom. 12. 9.* and cleave (saith he) to that which is good; or, as the word may be rendered, *Be married and glued* to that which is good, let there be an unspeakable and undissolvable knot of union between you and that which is good: And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holiness, we would endeavour more to be clothed with it: but that is the great ground why we advance not in holiness, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made *like God*. O will ye think on it, What a thing is it for you who are the dust of his feet, to be made conform to him? Seventhly, A Christian is not much in the exercise of other duties that should go along with faith, suspect that faith for presumption, that can act, and be maintained without Prayer, certainly prayer it keepeth

keepeth in the life of Faith: Prayer, it is that grace that must act mutually with faith, in accomplishing that blessed work of Sanctification, and if we prayed more, and believed more, then we should have more to speak concerning the victory over our lusts. When was it, O Christian and expectant of heaven, that ye was constrained to put up an *Ebenizer*, and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped mee*? When was it, O Christian and expectant of heaven, that ye was put to cry forth, *God hath arisen, and mine enemies are scattered before my face*? I will tell you what is your practice, ye make such a covenant with your idols, as *Nabash* did with the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, 1 Sam. 11. 2, 3. your lusts desire to make you pluck out your right eyes, and there is nothing your lusts will command you, but almost ye will obey; but would you send out prayers as a messenger to tell the King of such a tyrannie, ye should know better what it is to bee victorious. There is such a Covenant between the graces of the Spirit, especially between faith and Prayer (if so wee may allude) as was made between *Joab* and *Abishai*, 2 Sam. 10. 11. one grace, as it were, faith to another, If I be weak, *Come over and help me*, and if ye be weak, *I will come and help you*. When once grace is like to fall in battel, then another grace cometh and helpeth it; when faith is like to die, then prayer and experience cometh in and sweetly helpeth faith; when love is beginning to die, and waxe cold in the fight, then faith cometh in and putteth life in love; and

and when patience is like to fall and be overcome, then *faith* comes in and speaks that word to patience, *Wait on God, for I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance.* Oftentimes our patience and our sense they joyn together, for when sense speaketh good things, patience is in life, but when once sense preacheth hard things, it is like to die, and Faith must then maintain and uphold it.

The third thing that we shall speak as to faiths influence upon Sanctification, shall be to draw these four conclusions from the point.

The first is, That ye may know from this, the rise and original of your little successe over corruption: There are many that are troubled with this question; O! what is the ground that I get not victory over my lusts, and they propose that question to Christ that once the Disciples proposed to him, *Why was it that I could not cast out such a devil?* And I can give no other answer nor Christ gave to them, it is, because ye have not faith; For if yee had faith as a grain of mustard seed, yee might say unto your idols, depart from us, and they should obey you; and there should not be a mountain in the way between you and heaven, but if ye had faith, it should be rolled away and become a plain. And the ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols, is, That they are not much in the exercise of faith; sometimes yee enter in the lists with your lusts in your own strength,

then

then ye are carried captives, and if ye do enter in the lists having some faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if faith get but one stroke.

I will tell you six things which if faith overcome, it keepeth the fields, and maketh the Christian sing a song of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First, Faith helpeth a Christian to overcome that idol of *impatience* and discontent, some never met with a discouragement, but they cry out, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer*, they are soon put to the end of their patience: Now faith can overcome such an idol, and I will tell you three excellent things that faith performeth to the soul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. 1. Faith telleth the Christian *there is an end*, and their expectation shall not be cut off; Faith telleth that there is a morning as well as night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement, when they are brought to the midnight of trouble; Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, and how near the approaching of the morning, when day shall break and all their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any losse or disadvantage that they have; if ye losse your son, or your choicest contentment in the world, Faith will say such a word as *Elkana* said to *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 1. 8. *Is not Christ better to thee then sensens?* The choicest contentments ye can lose, (that is faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them; and so this maketh the soul

oul be ashamed of their impatiency, and to  
 ive over their fretting at the excellent and  
 ise dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth  
 Christian see, that there is not a dispensati-  
 on that hee meeteth with, but it hath these  
 wo excellent ends, it hath our *advantage* as  
 one end, and the glory of the Lord as another  
 end : and there is not a dispensation that a  
 Christian meeteth with, but these are the glo-  
 rious ends proposed in it. And therefore I  
 would only give you this advice, evermore  
 when yee meet with a dark dispensation, let  
 faith interpret it, for it is only the best inter-  
 preter of dark dispensations ; for if yee meet  
 with sense, this is its interpretation, he is not  
 hastening me in love, but punishing me with  
 the wound of an enemy, but faith will pro-  
 phesy good things to you in the darkest night.

The second next great idol that faith will  
 bring low, is that idol of coverousnesse and  
 desire to the things of the world. I think  
 that word, *Eccles. 3. 11.* was never so much  
 accomplished as it is in those dayes, and  
 amongst you, *Hee hath set the world in your*  
*eyes*, that is the idol that dwelleth and  
 lodgeth within you : yea, the world it hath  
 your first thoughts in the morning, and your  
 last thoughts at night ; yea more, it hath  
 your thoughts when yee are at Prayer, and  
 when ye are at Preaching ; yea, it hath such  
 dominion over you, that it giveth you, as  
 were, a new Bible, and in all the ten Com-  
 mands scraperth out the Name of God, and  
 setteth down the world. And whereas  
 God saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but*  
*me,*

me, the world faith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me, &c.* But faith will bring this idol low, and soon let you see the vanity and emptinesse of it; yea, faith would let you see a more noble object, and withall, discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to spend in following after lies: And I am perswaded of this, that if ye could win to shake hands with cold death every day, and say, thou at last shall bee my prince, and shall be the king to whom I shall bee a subject, and if ye believed that the day of Eternity were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie these pursuits after the world: And I shall say, he is a blessed Christian that can maintain alwayes such thoughts of the world, as he shall have when hee is standing upon the outmost line between Time and Eternity. I shall say it, and believe it. O worldling, and O thou that hast the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day shall once come, that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the world, as those that undervalued it never so much.

The third great idol that faith will bring low, is that idol of *self love* and *self-indulgence*, that which is the great mother of all other Idols. I think, if there were no more to bee said against that Idol of self love and self-indulgence, that which is in 2 Tim. 3. 2 were sufficient, that amongst all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the first place, *They shall be lovers of themselves* we cannot take pains for Christ, we cannot go about the exercise of any duty, because

that idol of self-indulgence forbiddeth us. I will tell you its counsel and great advice it giveth you, *O person, pity thy self*, that same counsel Peter gave his Master, it biddeth you *pity your self*: But if wee could rightly interpret that language, it would be this, *destroy your self, for self-indulgence, and self-love* is that which will ruine you. O what blessed attainments of God; what blessed fruitations of Jesus Christ, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God hath that idol of self-indulgence obstructed, and *not only* utterly ruined, even in the best? I think, if once yee could set your foot upon that idol, the rest should fall apace; that is the *general* of all the forces of your lusts, and it is as *Saul*, the head higher then the rest of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that faith will subdue, is self-righteousnesse, this is a great thing wee maintain, we will never renounce our own righteousness and submit to the righteousness of Christ: and the great ground of it is That there is this principle within us all, we love to go to heaven through a Covenant of Works, and wee never desire to be much obliged to any other, we cannot submit our selves to the righteousness of Christ.

The fifth great idol that faith can subdue, is that of *pleasure*, the world, and the contentments of it: *Pleasure* is the great idol that many worship and adore, there are some that love the gain of the world, and other are others that love the pleasures of the world; but faith hath a noble influence

upon the bringing low of such an idol; for faith discovereth to a soul more excellent pleasures, more sweet delights nor is to be found under the Sun; Faith maketh a Christian lose his state unto all things that are here below; Faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold these passing vanities, those transient delights of a present evil world.

Our second conclusion is this, That as Faith helpeth Sanctification, so Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell yow three great advantages Faith hath by the growth and exercise of Sanctification. 1. It is a noble evidence of faith, and maketh a Christian to be perswaded that hee is sealed upon the Rock, and that his interest in God is made sure. Sanctification is that which will help a Christian daily to read his interest in God: This is clear from *Jam. 2. 18.* *I will shew thee my faith by my workes*, where this is clearly holden forth, That a Christian much in the work of Sanctification, hee can upon all times give an extract of his Faith, and, as it were, discover it and shew it to the world. 2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, *Jam. 2. 22.* *And by workes was faith made perfect.* There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to faith through the exercise of the work of Sanctification; for not only is it thereby made manifest, and receiveth such a shining luster and splendor, as that sometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold a Believer, but it also receiveth strength and power; Faith is not



*for promoting Sanctification.* 141

of the nature of these things that spend themselves in bringing forth, but on the contrary if faith bring forth a hundred children (I mean works of holiness) in one day, it groweth stronger : and this is further clear, 2 Pet. 1. 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither bee barren nor unfruitfull.* And from that other word, *Jam. 2.* where it is said, *That faith without works is dead, being alone :* If faith be alone, it wants its spiritual life and vigour ; but if yee were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification, ye would, no doubt, attain to a noble and lively acting of that grace of Faith. And, lastly, if a Christian be much in this work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of faith, sometimes Faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much donbring, that faith and a pure conscience joynd together, they make an excellent feast, and maketh a Christian rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Thirdly, Wee may draw this conclusion, if faith have influence upon the work of sanctification, and helperth the producing of noble conformity to God, then I say, there are many that their faith is a delusion, and their hope shall bee cut off as a *Spiders web.* There are some that have faith, that have not sanctification, nor knows not what it is. and shall not that faith unquestionably *perish as a dream, and evanish as the vision of the night* ? and therefore if ye would testifie the reality of your faith, then study more the work of sanctification. I shall but from *Joh. 8. 14.*

## 142      *The usefulness of Faith*

15. give you these eight properties of a hypocrites faith and hope, which may make you try and examine your self. 1. Their hope and their faith is but an act of folly, yea, there is not such an act of foolishnesse under heaven, as a hypocrites hope; because it is but a castle in the aire, and as writing to himself a charter on the sand: so that word yee have rendered, whose *hope shall be cut off*; is in the Original, whose *folly shall be cut off*; shewing this, that they build without a foundation, and so their faith must bee most unsure and uncertain. 2. The thing they hope for shall at last loath them: O hypocrites, yee hope for enjoyment of Christ, but be perswaded of it, Christ shall eternally loath you, and yee shall eternally loath Christ: that is clear in that same word, *Whose hope shall be cut off*, or as the word may be read, *Whose hope shall loath them*, the thing he hoped for shall loath him, and Christ shall say, *Depart, I know you not*. 3. And though yee have now much delight and pleasure in the actings of your presumptuous hope, yet at the last, ye shall loath that hope: The word will carry that, not only the thing ye hoped for shall loath you, but ye likewise shall loath your hope. The day is coming, that yee shall cry forth, cursed be the day that ever I believed that I should get heaven. 3. It shall at last be the matter of his vexation. from that word, whose *hope shall be cut off*; or as the word may be rendered, whose *hope shall vex him*. O when the hypocrites shall meet with that anxious,

that dreadfull disappointment one day, they shall then put their hand on their head, being ashamed because of their confidence. 4. He studieth by all means to keep his hope, though it be but false, therefore have ye that word in the 15 verse, *hee holdeth it fast, or as the word is, hee keepeth it with hand and arm, with all his strength hee keepeth his hope*: so that if Christ would come from heaven and say, *man, thou art a hypocrite, and thy hope shall be cut off*, they would say, *I will keep my hope Sir, and maintain it*, and that is an evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation; I love never a faith that in this side of time is unchangeable, and never knoweth what it is to have ups nor downs. 5. It is built alwayes upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word, *He shall lean upon his house*, which we suppose may interpret thus, *hee shall lean upon his worldly enjoyments, or upon these spiritual like enjoyments hee met with*. The hope of a hypocrite is never built upon Christ, and so unquestionably that hope shall be cut off and evanish. 6. Let hypocrites hold fast their hope with both their arms, I will say these three words to them: First, If all the Ministers should preach to you, and desire you to quire your hope, and yee will not, yet both your hope and you shall bee separate: as it is in that word, *Your hope shall depart from you*, and yee shall quite it. Secondly, *Your hope will bring you to death*, and no further: according to that word, *John 18. 14. Whose hope shall bring them*.

them to the King of terrors : Will it bring me  
 no further say you, O no, *The King of ter*  
*rors shall separate you and your hope.* Thirdly  
 The day is coming when the foundation of  
 it shall be discovered, and there shall no  
 bee a delusion but it shall be unfolded. The  
 day is approaching when Christ shall ask  
 how you got your faith, and how you main-  
 tained it. 7. The hypocrites hope is a  
 poor building, it is *as a spiders web* ; which  
 I conceive (without being critick) is this  
 The hope of hypocrites they spin it out of  
 their own bowels, they have it not from  
 Christ, but as yee see a spider spin out of  
 its own bowels, so do they out of them-  
 selves, it is no better stuff then their own  
 rotten righteousness, Christ never began  
 those unto a lively hope. Let mee beseech  
 you therefore, that by all means ye would  
 study to make sure your interest in God, and  
 to build your faith on him, whose name is  
 that *munition of rocks* ; For believe it, I may  
 say it with much perswasion, I know there  
 are many that shall once meet (if God pre-  
 vent it not) with a dreadfull disappoint-  
 ment ; And therefore as ye would not incur  
 that eternal hazard that is attending those  
 that presumptuously take hold of a hope  
 before Christ take hold of them, study to  
 search your hope what it is : I desire not to  
 raze any foundation of their hope that is  
 laid by the hand of Christ, but would desire  
 and charge you to raze the foundation of  
 that hope which yee have laid from the be-  
 ginning by your own hands, and hee knew it

not. I would presse these three things upon you. First, O yee that are strangers to Christ, and that know not what it is to imbrace the offers of the everlasting Gospel, obey that excellent counsel, *2 Chron. 3. 8. Give Christ your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yeeld your self to the Lord*, it is in the Original, *Give your hand to God*; which is in short, *Marry him*, and be content to contract your self to him; for believe it, the day is coming, that either that contract between you and Christ, shall bee eternally confirmed, or that contract between the devil and you, shall be eternally ratified. And, I suppose, there is so much spoken to the commendation of that noble Plant of renown, that yee may take Christ (if so wee may speak) blindly, ye may close your eyes and take him, for hee shall never disappoint your hope; for let you think of him to Eternity, hee shall alwayes be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earnestly desire you once to search and try, what was the first rise of your faith in Jesus Christ: I am perswaded of it, there are many that take up their faith at their fode, they never travelled in pain, and yet faith is brought forth. Is not this a mystery? shall it be said, *before they travelled, they brought forth*? I do not question but there may be lesse and greater pangs of the new birth, but this is most certain, there is alwayes some either lesser troubles or greater, till that childe be brought forth: and yet I may condemn these that stay too long in the place of the breaking

forth of children, Christ will never refuse  
 you when ye do really come, because ye  
 have not been so many years and dayes in pri-  
 son to the Law: Thirdly, Let me desire  
 you to go and ask, is there a grave between  
 you and heaven, in all that way through  
 which the Saints have travelled, upon which  
 this is written, here lyeth a man that sincere-  
 ly sought life from Christ, and he denyed  
 him. I think without encroaching too  
 much upon the searching forth of the ex-  
 ercise of the Saints in heaven, I think we  
 may suppose, there may be in heaven some  
*Queries and Interrogations*: Christ shall ask,  
 O beloved, Did ye want any thing here below  
 when ye was sent forth to travel in the  
 world? and yee shall be constrained to an-  
 swer, *No*: Christ shall ask that question of  
 you, Did I not all things well? and ye  
 shall be constrained to answer, *Yes*: Christ  
 shall propose that question, Are ye not well  
 rewarded for all your pains? and you shall  
 be constrained to answer, *Yes*: O but to  
 take him, He is the blessed and most excellent  
 One in heaven and in earth, it is the best bar-  
 gain ever ye made: O ye Merchants that  
 have made many excellent bargains to your  
 own apprehension, will ye come and make  
 one excellent bargain yet, that will make  
 you eternally up? And what is that? Come  
 and *buy Christ* and take him for nothing, this  
 is not your ordinary bargaining: there is  
 few comes to you, and biddeth you buy ex-  
 cellent things *without money*; but come in  
 the Gospel, and ye shall get Christ *without*  
*money*:

money : O niggards that are loath to spend your money in the world, will yee come to Christ and believe on him, take him freely: O say ye, if I could get three things of Christ, I would come. 1. I would have much gold and silver; I say, come to Christ, and ye shall get much gold and silver: Is that true? it is abundantly true: See *Job 22. 25, 26.* where pressing that exhortation, *Acquaint thyself with God*, and using many arguments, he saith, *Thou shalt lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.* Is not that gold enough? yea, ye shall have silver likewise, *Thou shalt have plenty of silver.* In the 26. verse, ye shall not only have gold and silver, but shall have plenty of it, and shall have the most excellent and refined gold. But O say ye, will that promise be literally accomplished to me if I come to Christ. I would only say these three things to thee: 1. Come to Christ, and if gold and silver be for thy advantage, thou shalt have it literally accomplished. 2. I say, ye shall have as much contentment in Jesus Christ, as if yee had this house full of gold. 3. I will say this to thee, Christ shall be thy gold and thy silver: according to that word in the 26. verse, which is most remarkable; yea, *the Almighty shall be thy defence*; or as it is in the Original, shall be thy gold, speaking of the promise of gold before. Secondly, Ye say, I would have this that what I purpose might be accomplished: I say, come to Christ and yee shall have that likewise, *Job. 22. 28. Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee*; which I

## 348 *The usefulness of Faith, &c.*

conceive, doth not only take in these spiritual decrees; but likewise these that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have (say yee) and I would come to Christ, and it is, that I might have all the desires of my heart: I say, O man, and O woman, come to Christ, and thou shalt have what thou desirest: This is clear from *Psal. 37. 4. Delight thy self in God, and hee shall give thee the desires of thy heart*: What can ye have man but it is there? Would yee have any thing of Christ? Hee putteth a blank in your hand, and saith that word which he said to *Solomon, Ask*; What would yee have, and I shall give you, Christ, as it were, putteth his name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and hee desireth you to ask what ye would have, And is not this an excellent bargain? O niggard, what would yee have which ye will not get in Christ? And be perswaded, that ye that refuse and will not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in heaven will return upon thy head, the eternall curse of all the expectants of heaven and heirs of life will return upon the head of that person that will not take Christ. And cursed, cursed shall that person be who will not take Christ, and one day *all the Congregation in heaven and earth shall say, Amen.*

SER.





SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Assurance is a precious gift which many that live in these dayes do undervalue, and tread under foot; do not the Christians of these times go halting between two opinions, being neither positive that they are received into the adoption of children, nor positive that they are yet in a state of alienation, and enemies in their minds by wicked works; yea, and (that which is worse) there are many among us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they pursue more to satisfy their sense for the present, nor to have a solide well grounded assurance for time to come: I could wish that all the debates and questions of these dayes, that take up so much of our time, and so much of our spirits from better things, were happily drowned in these four excellent questions, which without controversy are of greatest concernment for all to have resolved. 1. Where shall I rest all night when the long shadows of the everlasting

ing evening shall be stretched out upon me and whither or not hath Christ gone before to take up a place for me in his Fathers house.

2. It is a soul concerning question, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* to bee asking at him that can sweetly resolve you. And 3. not to rest there, but to bee crying forth in the morning, *What shall I do to bee saved,* and to bee crying out in the evening, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do.*

4. It is sweet to be asking seriously, *Saw yee him whom my soul loveth:* There is much of our time spent in asking news from Court, and from abroad, concerning the revolutions of States and Kingdomes: But I suppose, it were better to ask, *What news from heaven concerning thy self,* and *what news from within,* and news of thy Bridegrooms coming? for these are great Courts, I mean the Court of heaven, and the Court of conscience, the affairs of which, a Christian should endeavour much to know.

5. It is a soul concerning question, that a Christian should be much in proposing to himself, *What shalt I render unto the Lord for all his benefits.* It is certain, we must say, that our faith and assurance, and all our other mercies are from him, and yet alas, we are negligent in praises, we may with *Tamar* rent our garments of divers colours, even the garments of the Kings daughters, because of spiritual whoredome against God, and our ingratitude to him.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a length of that precious and fundamentall grace

grace of Faith, wee have thought fit to shut up all in speaking a little upon these words we now have read, concerning the evidence and assurance of Faith. The Apostle in this Chapter is vindicating his Ministry and Apostleship, from the contempt that was cast upon it, he proveth he was a Minister of the New Testament, called and sent of God, by the blessing and successe he had among them, in that hee had not plowed nor threshed in vain; and they being so much in censuring his way, and seeking an account of his Ministry: In these words, he doth (as it were) draw them off by a holy diversion unto another businesse, as if hee had said to them, O *Corinthians*, I will divert you from the exercise of judging me, and will lead you into an exercise that is more divine and profitable; be much in judging and examining yourselves: and indeed, it is a truth worth our observation, that if we were more in judging of our selves, wee would be lesse in judging others: but alas, there are some of us, wee are so much abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considerable. First, That there is such a thing attainable by a Christian while hee is here, as a distinct perswasion and assurance that he is in the Faith, and hath an interest in Christ: *by being in the faith*; here is not to be understood, a being in the doctrine of Faith only, but it is to be understood of principally, being indeed and really united to Christ by Faith. Secondly, That the seek-  
ibg.

ing after assurance, is a necessary commanded duty, for ye see here the words very imperative, *Examine your selves, prove your selves.* Thirdly, That there are many mistakes and delusions among people, concerning that noble and excellent thing, *Assurance*, there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ shall once discountenance and sweep away, like a *Spiders web*, and this is imported in these words, *Examine your selves*, or as the word may bee rendered, *Take an acurate and an experimental search of your selves, try your selves, or prove your selves*: it is a word that is borrowed from the Gold-smiths fineing and trying Gold. And so his putting of the *Corinthians* to so acurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing, many do passe a decreet in their own favours before Christ hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly, Take notice of this from the word, that there is much and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we bee in the faith or no; this is imported in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, That one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assurance, whether we be in the faith or no, is self examination, and putting our self to the trial, as if he had said, would ye have a distinct perswasion that yee are in Christ, then bee much in the exercise of self examination. For the rest of the words of the verse, wee intend not to handle.

As to the first, *That there is such a thing attainable*

attain  
sons  
know  
have  
perf  
2. ve  
and  
Apot  
shall  
God  
know  
selve  
with  
the  
how  
1. 1  
may  
grea  
Epis  
Shri  
and  
Chri  
man  
to  
2 P  
lige  
It is  
lasti  
assu  
end  
an c  
imm  
God  
assu  
atta

attainable: I shall only propose these reasons unto you to make it evident. 1. It is known in Scripture, that the Saints of old have in ordinary way attained to distinct perswasion of their interest in Christ, Song. 2. vers. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his,* and Rom. 8. 38. *I am perswaded (saith the Apostle) that neither death nor life, &c. shall bee able to separate mee from the love of God in Christ.* And 2 Cor. 5. ver. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, wee have a house with God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* 2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures, to shew how Christians may attain to assurance, 1 Joh. 1. 13. *These things I write unto you, that yee may know that yee have eternal life.* The great end and design of John, writing in these Epistles, is, to make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There are many commands in Scripture for Christians to be serious in searching after assurance, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Wherefore brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* It is the blessed end of Gods oath in the everlasting Covenant, that a Christian might get assurance. What was the ground and great end that God confirmed his Covenant with an oath, was it not, Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation.* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of joy and

and love could not be well exercised : if a Christian were evermore in the dark concerning his interest in Christ, hee could not give obedience to that exhortation, *Rejoyce evermore, again, I say, rejoyce,* 6. The Scripture hath set down these means by which a Christian may win to assurance : as is clear, *1 Joh. 3. 18, 19. 2 Pet. 4. 5.* compared with *vers 10.* where the Apostle Peter pressing the Doctrine of making our calling and election sure, hee setteth down these excellent means by which they may win to in, and doubtlesse the marks and evidences that are registrate in the Scripture of a gracious state, do assure us, that assurance is attainable. 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments, but that our assurance may bee confirmed, and that our faith may be strengthened, the two Sacraments are the two great Seals of heaven that are put to the Charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, and the more full improvement of this first point, I shall only offer these considerations. 1. I would have it taken notice of, that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no such band of union between them, that the one cannot consist without the other : A Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darknesse and have no light : a Christian may be going to heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from thy sight* ; yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and sometime a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is*  
towards

towards me, who are now under darknesse concerning their interest, and in much bitterness of spirit, doe sometimes cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* But therefore let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance, and deserted ones who have lost it; when ye misse assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces, but when ye sit in darknesse and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay yourselves upon your God;* that is when ye cannot reach the faith of assurance, be much in maintaining of adherence, remember *Jobs* divinity, *Though thou should kill me, yet will I trust in thee,* and consider that sweet word, *He will keep them in perfect peace, whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, That since assurance is attainable, ye would study to finde out and remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this, we conceive, that the obstructions of a Christians assurance, are especially in these two. 1. Our mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And, 2. Our untender and unsuitable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort we shall lay before you these five. The first is, want of favourable termes of prayer; this often maketh a Christian to debate his interest, and call in question his evidences, *Lam. 3. 8.* compared with verse 18. *I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayers:* And this is the conclusion of that dispensation, verse 18. *My hope and my strength*

*Strength is perished from the Lord ; and this is especially occasioned when the Christian is most serious and fervent in prayer, and then he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly debate their interest. And I confesse, it is a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer ; but yet that needeth not make a Believer question all, and debate the reality of his interest in God, since the dearest of all the children of the Kingdom have been so dealt with, even a David, Psal. 22. Cryed night and day without silence, and is not heard, but cryeth out, Why art thou so far from helping, and from the words of my roaring ; yea, that passage may relate to him who was the root and off Spring of David ; for even he was so dealt with, and had not presently a sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, that the cup might passe from him.*

Secondly, The want of sensible enlargement and liberty in prayer, that hee never got to his knees, but his heart beginneth to die like a stone within him, then hee cryeth forth that word, 2 Cor. 3. 17. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*, and sure if I had the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exercise of prayer, and that this is a rise of the disputing of our interest, is clear from Psal. 77. 4. compared with ver. 7. 9. saith David, *I am sore troubled that I cannot speak, I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue sticketh to the roof of my mouth* : he from hence draweth that conclusion, *Hath God forgotten to bee gracious, and hath hee in*

*wrath*



wrath shut up his tender mercies for ever: I confesse, this also is a sad dispensation to meet with an absent and veiled Christ in prayer: so that we can never go to seek God in secret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, especially when we have lost that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *Dauids* perplexity much heightened, ver. 5, 6. from his remembring his song in the night, and his calling to mind the years of ancient times; yet wee may remember how soon *David* wrote his tetractations, as to that sad conclusion, *I said, this is my infirmity*, ver. 10. and so should we do when upon every straining in prayer, wee begin to question all the Lords kindnesse towards us.

A third obstruction of assurance, is a Christians wrestling with his corruptions painfully and seriously, and yet not meeting with any sensible victory over them, but upon the contrary, their corruptions seem to bee stronger, and they themselves seem to bee weaker, and then it is, they strengthen their misbelief, but that word, 1 Joh. 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*: And indeed, this is a knot that is not easily loosed, but when hee seeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, hee will cry out, *I am gñe*, and there is no help in *Israel* concerning this thing, and yet this also is a word in haste, *Paul* hath registred himself a standing witness, even after hee was a chosen vessel, *Rom. 7*. How strangely a childe of God may bee born down with a body of death even under most serious

serious wrestlings against it: And therefore if thou seriously maintain that combat, though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thy assurance.

Fourthly, When a Christian is put to more then ordinary outward affliction, when God doth dispence sadly unto them in outward things, they then begin to call in question their interest, and dispute their assurance, this is clear, by comparing *Lament 3. vers. 18.* with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they meet with, he draweth that conclusion in verse 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord, and Jan. 2. 2.* where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise. *I am now cast out of thy sight,* the devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity and presents it to a Christian; *Call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go:* As if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted so as thou art afflicted, and so he would have *Job* to quitte his integrity; But yet we know all these blessed ones for all their afflictions, were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest secure in him, yea, *as many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chasten,* and it is bastards and not sons on whom he will not bestow a rod, and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of afflictions.

And lastly, The rise of a Christians discouragement, and that which hindereth their assurance, is, when their former experience of the manifestations of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon

which

which they have built become castles unto them as the white of an egge, and when they meet not with God in Ordinances, but these become lifelesse, when these three rise together upon them, their case becomes very perplexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been Davids case, *Psal. 77.* When he remembered his song in the night, and the dayes of old, and yet had no sweetnesse in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter complaints which are there expressed: but yet as we said before, this was his infirmity, and there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such an account; because the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the best, and the Lord is not alwayes present, but though sometimes the candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head, yet at other times hee is necessitate to cry out, *O that it were with me as in months past.*

The second sort of obstructions of a Christians assurance, I mean such as flow from our untender dealing towards God are,

First, A guilty conscience; that is a remarkable word, *1 Tim. 3. 9.* Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience; It telleth us, that this excellent grace of Faith cannot bide but in a cleanly lodging, even in a pure conscience, and when a Christian setteth about to believe hee will know how a guilty conscience will flee in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe, dare thou believe;* the guiltinesse of a Christians conscience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain lest thou be thrust thorow:* And I tell

tell you three disadvantages of a guilty conscience. 1. It obstructeth a Christians boldnesse in making applications to Christ; his heart saith *close*, and his necessary saith *close*; but his guilty conscience cryeth out, *O stand aback* and do not *close*. 2. A guilty conscience oftentimes it hindereth the discoveries of Christ to the soul, and doth so affright and terrific, yea, it will so sting and bite us, that when he revealeth himself, we cannot take notice, when he would lay on a plaster, our souls will tear it off, and refuse to be comforted. 3. It doth exceedingly obstruct our going about duty. O but our soul moves slowly in the paths of God when wee are under the power of a guilty conscience.

The second obstruction is, That wee are not much in the exercise of tendernesse. O but if a Christian were tender, and if in every step of his life hee desired to set Christ before his eyes, he wold easily win to much assurance, according to that word, *Isa. 64 5. Thou meetest him that rejoycest and worketh righteousness, and these that remember thee in thy wayes*: Would yee know the assured Christian, it is the tender Christian; the Christian that doth not crucifie convictions, the Christian that breaketh not resolutions, the Christian that doth not sit *calls* and opportunities to prayer, the Christian that saith not of any sin *it is a little one*; or the Christian that searcheth alwayes, watcheth alwayes, examineth alwayes, and is alwayes casting out sin, that is the assured Christian.

The third obstruction is, The want of the exercise

exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this disposition, to fear the Lord and his goodnesse; this is clear from that word, *Psal. 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and hee will shew to them his Covenant.* I think there are these two great evidences that much of the power of godlinesse is gone from some of our hearts: wee fear God no more, nor if wee were his companion. And we fear our selves no more, nor if we had not a deceitfull heart within us, we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaketh that much of the life of Religion is lost amongst us.

The fifth thing that doth much astruict our Assurance, is, much worldly mindednesse, and a eager pursuit after the things of a present life: That is remarkable, *2 Cor. 4. ver. last,* compared with *2 Cor. 5. 1. We look not unto the things that are seen,* that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present world, which the men of the world seek and delight themselves in: and it is subjoynd, *For wee know, if this our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, wee have a house not made with hands; so we see assurance and mortification to the world, are much knit together.* Would yee know where to find our hearts, the most part of us are conversing with idols of the world; Would yee know where to find our hearts, they are among the vanities of the world. O how true is that word, *Psal. 39. Man walks in a vain shew:* What is man in all his doings, but as one walking in a long gallery that is set about

about with pictures, gazing on these things and saluting them all, as if they were living *Kings and Queens*, and great persons that could do him good; and so our pursuing after the world, is nothing else but a *dead shadow* pursuing after *dead shadows*, a man that is but a short living shadow pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure the one thing necessary.

Fifthly, Want of distinct apprehension of these three, the infinite love of Christ, the infinite power of Christ, and the infinite wisdom of Christ; there is not an objection of Christians that yee have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinite love; there is not an objection that ye have concerning the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense ocean of the infinite power of Christ; there is not an objection ye have from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom and goodnesse of Christ, and there can bee nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applied, taken up and rested on by the soul. The last thing which hindereth our assurance, is, the smalnesse of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is small, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore, if wee would have assurance, let us not to ly still and dispute, but to rise up and to increase our stock, and then you shall know ye are rich. *Grow in Grace and the knowledge of God, and by this ye shall know if ye follow to know the Lord.*

The

The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times, but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and Christ and he joyns hands together, even then sometimes the best robe is put on upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet, *Mat. 9. 17.* Paul meeteth with assurance immediately after his conversion, *1 Joh. 1. 12.* I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father; and before that, in the 12. vers. I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you; so that when a Christian is brought into Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of heaven, and say, friend come and see, here is your name written from eternity. But do not mistake me; I do not say, this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth through the thunderings of the Law, these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins and peace of God, even at their first acquaintance. I know there are some Christians, that if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, and now I see,* but for the time and the day, I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in Prayer, and watching unto that exercise, *Dan. 9. 23.* com.

about with pictures, gazing on these things and saluting them all, as if they were living *Kings and Queens*, and great persons that could do him good; and so our pursuing after the world, is nothing else but a *dead shadow* pursuing after *dead shadows*, a man that is but a short living shadow pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure *the one thing necessary*.

Fifthly, Want of distinct apprehension of these three, the infinite love of Christ, the infinite power of Christ, and the infinite wisdom of Christ; there is not an objection of Christians that yee have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinite love; there is not an objection that ye have concerning the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense ocean of the infinite power of Christ; there is not an objection ye have from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom and goodness of Christ, and there can be nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applied, taken up and rested on by the soul. The last thing which hindereth our assurance, is, the smallness of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is small, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore, if wee would have assurance, let us not to ly still and dispute, but rise up and to increase our stock, and then you shall know ye are rich, *Grow in Grace and the knowledge of God*, and by this ye shall know if ye follow to know the Lord.

The



The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times, but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall but name these:

The first is, when he is first converted, and Christ and he joyns hands together, even then sometimes the best robe is put on upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet, *Act. 9. 17.* Paul meeteth with assurance immediately after his conversion, *1 Joh. 1. 12.* *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father; and before that, in the 12. vers. I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you; so that when a Christian is brought into Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of heaven, and say, friend come and see, here is your name written from eternity. But do not mistake me; I do not say, this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth through the thunderings of the Law, these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins and peace of God, even at their first acquaintance. I know there are some Christians, that if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, and now I see, but for the time and the day, I know not when it was.**

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in Prayer, and watching unto that exercise, *Dan. 9. 23.* com.

pared with the preceeding verse, hee being much and serious in prayer, doth meet with that word from heaven, *O man greatly beloved*, or as the word is, *O man of desires*, and *Acts 10. 2, 3, 4.* when *Cornelius* is much in exercise of watching and prayer, hee seeth a vision, and getteth intimation of his peace with God; and *Jacob* when hee was wrestling with Christ, *Gen. 32.* he hath that testimony given him, *Thou hast as a prince wrestled with God, and prevailed.*

The third time is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity: I desire not to be mistaken in this neither; I know some Christians are led to heaven through a dark vantage so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, untill the day come when they get him in their arms eternally within his Fathers house; Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question, *Where am I going*, but this is certain, that sometimes, yet oftentimes Christ will dispense a broad sight of a Christians interest unto him at the day of death, *2 Sam. 25. 5.* When was it that *David* sang that song, which hath strengthened thousands in the very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him, and *2 Tim. 4. 8.* When was it that *Paul* sang that song, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, therefore is laid for me a crown of righteousness*, was it not even then when he was ready, to depart and

be offered up? And when was it when old Simeon did sing that blessed song, Luke 2. 29. Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation, was it not within a step of death, as it were, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart hee carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to Simeon was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when hee is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before Abraham be put to forsake his native land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, hee meeteth with sweet intimation of his interest, Gen. 12. 2. *I will make of thee a great nation,* and vers. 7. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham,* and before Jeremiah be sent a Preacher to a rebellious people, he will have that word spoken unto him, *I know thee before thou wast brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done some singular act of obedience, when Abraham had obeyed the Lord, and was com-  
mended to offer up his Isaac, he meeteth with a sight of his interest and Covenant renewed to him with an oath, Gen. 22. 16. *By myself I have sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing, I will blesse thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven.*

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet with hard trials, difficulties and afflictions in the world, then they usually meet with assurance, and so Gen. 28. 14, 15, 16. before

*Jacob* go to serve *Laban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The seventh time is, when a Christian is under sad persecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from heaven to comfort him and assure him of his fatherly love and mercy: When was it that Christ left that noble Legacy to his Disciples, *Joh. 14. ver. 27. My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you*, was it not when he himself was to leave them to troublesome and sorrowful dayes, in a persecuting world.

The eighth time is at some solemn Ordinances and approaches to God; the dayes of a Communion to a tender Christian have been sweet dayes, when Christ hath come to the soul, and said; *Behold me, behold me.* I think the eleven Apostles met with much assurance of their interest in Christ at the Communion they were at with him: O what sweet intimations were these, *This is my body which is broken for you*, and *this cup is the New Testament in my blood shed for you*, and a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentation*, and *I appoint unto you a kingdom.*

We come now to the second point which we proposed from the words, viz. That assurance is a thing which may be attained; so to seek after it, is a necessary duty: let me not be mistaken, as if I said, the having of assurance were simply necessary to Salvation; no, that were a Doctrine as comfortable upon the other hand, as the Popish doctrine of the impossibility of assurance.

upon the other: But the thing I say, is, that the Christians seeking after assurance, and his real (endeavouring to attain unto it, is a necessary command of God which hee hath bound upon the consciences of his children amongst other Gospel duties; And certainly, we need go no further for the clearing of this then the Text it self; what meaneth these peremptory injunctions, *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your own selves; Know yee not,* &c. but if you will, you may add that word, *2 Pet. 1. vers. 5. and 10. compared, what can be more expressly commanded, and more strongly pressed, then that Christians should bend their utmost endeavours for attaining unto this blessed condition of assurance: Give diligence, yea, give all diligence, yea, the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

From this, we shall only lay before you these Considerations. 1. If the seeking after assurance be a necessary duty, then these three things are most lamentable. First, That there are so many in this Generation who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their iniquity; they flatter themselves with a rotten assurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination: they never knew since the first day they were Baptized and did begin to professe Christ, what it was to mortifie one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one temptation, and yet they want not a strong perswasion of their interest in Christ: But ah, will yee

Stand in awe, lest ye meet with such a dreadful disappointment, as (when ye think ye are in the very gate of heaven) even then to fall backwards to the very bottom of hell, and when ye expect a kindly welcome from the Lord of Glory, as one who thinks you have been in Covenant with him this many years, ye meet with that dreadful summons, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*

2. How sad may we be upon this account; that howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not say they have attained it; yet so little diligence is used in pursuing after it: Is it not very lamentable, that many of you to whom I am speaking, since first ye gave up your names to Christ in a visible way, and were reported amongst the generation of the seekers of his face, scarce ever set a day or an hour apart to examine whether ever indeed you were in Christ or not. Alas, is heaven of so little moment, is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there of so small concernment to you, that ye will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your interest in the matter: What if any of you were but possessors of a thousand pound, and your interest or right unto it uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep depart from you, and your rest be unquiet till you had made it more secure? What think you shall the men of this generation answer in the day of the Lord for neglecting that one thing necessary, when they have been so vexing themselves about many things, and have been so serious in so many consultations

make sure a worm eaten portion in a perishing world; that the whole wit of Men and Angels cannot secure for one moment: It is certain, the root of all this slothfulness is *Apheism*. It is not possible that we believe it really there is a heaven as we believe there is an earth, or that the world to come is as real as that which is present, or else it must be a strange power in these lusts that keep us captive; that we are never suffered to think upon Eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shall fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it how serious and pressing that command is, 1 Pet. 1. 10. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*, when the Lord saith, *Give all diligence*, will ye give no diligence, and when he saith, *make your calling and election sure*, will ye live upon uncertainty, *I said to the foolish, deal not so foolishly*.

3. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live so contentedly under the want thereof: how strange is it that many are so seldom on their knees complaining of their uncertainty, if Christ were precious unto you, would it be so, I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christians I know not how long, that never had one sad thought about the want of assurance: when we look upon the desolations, vastations and plunderings in the world, how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more*; but when we speak of heaven we care not who deprive us of our portion there.

there. I will not limite the Lord, nor determine what he may do, but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many Christians of this age have a pleasant night and comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervaluers of assurance: I may fear, that lamentation shall be heard upon the death beds of many *O poor wretched wandering Soul: where art thou going: and it is no wonder it come to this when we are so long in beginning to ask the question.* And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question the souls that live contentedly under the want of assurance, are the careless daughters that dwell *leth at ease*; Christ and they are at a remarkable distance; it must be a cold winter and a dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point is, that if the seeking after assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves what means are fit for you to use that ye may attain it, and if ye enquire what these means are, I shall only lay before you some few.

1. That ye would be much in the exercise of Faith, I mean the direct acts of Faith, whereby the sinner from his sense and feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him, and leaping upon him for a full supply out of his fulnesse: for indeed there are two great faults amongst the Lord's people, some do seek assurance of Faith, before ever they seek to have Faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evi-

dences,



dences, whether they be real or not, then they are in strengthening their evidences, so that most of their time is spent in questioning: O! is this a real evidence of assurance; whereas more actual believing in Christ and gripping to the promises, and lesse disputing, were the shorter and surer way, that word is most clear, *Eph. 1. 13. After ye believed, ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise, that is, ye got assurance, but not before ye believed: and ye know it is said, Matth. 9. 2. And when Jesus saw their Faith, he said, Son, be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee.* so then it is clear, that to be much in believing, is the nearest way to assurance.

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths and promises of the Gospel, and frequently meditating of them; all assurance is by a practical syllogisme; the first proposition whereof, must needs bee a Scripture truth: and certainly, the firm assent to that truth, and the souls delightful meditation on it, is often blessed of the Lord as a special mean whereby the conscience is helped to make the assumption, and also to bring forth the conclusion: For instance, wee see with what strength of affection *Paul* after his faith on that word, *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, Christ Jesus came to save sinners; and presently we see what followeth on it, of whom I am the chief, then is his assurance; for doubtlesse he meaneth, that he was the chief of saved sinners; yea, certainly, a sinner thus exercising himself, will often find so*

much sweetnesse in the general truths, that he cannot but put to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exercise of all spiritual graces and Christian duties, that this is among the best means of attaining to assurance, is manifest from 2 Pet. 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for Indeed it is very observable, that the diligence there mentioned, is not a diligence in disputing and questioning about our election, but a diligence in the practice of duties and graces, as is clear from ver. 5. *Give all diligence* (saith the Apostle) *Whereto?* in adding to your faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, &c. and then ver. 8. *If ye do these things, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*; he doth not say in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ simply, but of our Lord Jesus: importing that, that the result of diligence in these graces, shall be the knowledge of Christ as ours, and of our interest in him: and then he addeth (upon the other hand) *he that lacketh these things, is blind and cannot see afar off*, this is, he cannot see far in any spiritual matter, and so not in the matter of his interest. O therefore, think not that ye will get assurance by lying down with the sluggard upon your bed, or by your formal prayer, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to assurance, ye must be striving in an agony, for so the word importeth, which is used to expresse our diligence in Christian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, so if ever ye would

would come to assurance, ye would be tender and circumspect in your walking, that is a clear word, *Psal. 50. last verse, To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God, and Isa. 32. The effect of righteousness is peace and assurance for ever:* Ah the untender walk that many of us have: it is no wonder to see us walk in darknesse, such stinking grosse vapors that ariseth off our conversation, cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from seeing God, and certainly such pearls as *Assurance* is not given to dogs and swine, lest they tread upon them.

## SERMON VIII.

*Cor. 13. 5. Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

**T**Here are two great ballances into which men do weight themselves; there are some that weight themselves in the ballance of deceit, who think that in all their labours there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the spirit, when he shall weigh them will engrave this upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and are found light:* but there are many who approve themselves,

selves, whom Christ shall never approve: There are many that call God *Father*, whom he will not call *Children*, and many that call Christ *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouse*. 2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the Sanctuary, who upon solide and most spiritual grounds do draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds and his desire is towards me*, who can with boldness and confidence look Christ in the face, and say, *thou art mine*, and with much spiritual confidence, take him in their arms, and cry out, he shall bee eternally mine: and sure there is not a more pleasant life than to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him*, am I not made up in him.

Before I come to the words, there are three great and most soul-concerning errours amongst the Christians of these dayes, that we desire ye may consider. 1. There are many that are more desirous to know what they are, then what they should do; there are some are more taken up to know whether they be justified and sanctified, then to be indeed justified and sanctified; and they are more desirous to know if they be in Christ, then indeed to be in him: and therefore we finde many who do spend a great deal more time disputing that question, *Whether am I in Christ or not*, then they do in using of these means by which real union and communion with him may be attained: But oh, will ye once study more to be in him, and that shall be the shortest way to attain

to the knowledge of your being in him. The second great error is, that some are more desirous to know what they should do, then they are desirous to do what they know; Are there not many of us that have this question, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord,* and yet we do not know his Commandment is with us; and that we should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. A third error is, that we are more in talking of Christ, than in believing in him, or closing with him: Some of us think to win to heaven by discourses, if we can talk of Christ, we think all is without debate or controversy; but alas, there are many who were sweet talkers of Christ, that are cursing him this day in Hell. And I would only say this by the way, if there be any of you that have win to any soul perswasion of your interest in Christ, I intreat you if you can put the conclusion upon record, that in such a day of such a Month, and such a Year of God, you did then win to cry out, *I am my beloveds and he is mine*: It seemeth to have been Davids practice, *Psal. 16. 2. O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*; and it was Jeremiahs practice, *Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul*, I say, yee should even mark that conclusion as they did, that when temptations come, and begin to assault you, ye may look to your record that yee have set down, and bee ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing, but I hope ere long, we shall bee  
above

above the reach of misbelief, and above the reach of fears, I hope ere long, we shall dispute no more, we shall be jealous no more, and we shall question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shall be sweetly drowned in that infinite ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. O *expectants of heaven*, *expectants of heaven*, are ye not looking after this day, are ye not looking after it: I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every day: he is upon his way; O to see him, we will even stand and wonder at him; I hope the day is coming when we shall never lose our grips of Christ any more, he is coming, he is coming, and I think if Christ would give a *Passé*, we would long to go hence: O what streets are these that are there, is there any here who is groaning for heaven, be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shall come, he shall come and wash all tears from our eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words, we told you that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them. The first was, that such a thing as a distinct and well grounded persuasion of our interest in Christ was attainable; and of this we have already spoken. The second thing is, That concerning this noble and excellent thing assurance, there are many mistakes among the people of God, and to make this evident, is is clear first in this Text, from that serious and accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, as we cleared  
unto

unto you from the force of the words, and his doubling of these exhortations, *Try your own selves, prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our assurance, 1 Cor. 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself,* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,* and therefore doth the Apostle adde, *Let every one prove his own work,* and verse 7. *Be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this, that we find in Scripture many who have been mistaken most dreadfully in the matter of their assurance, *Hos. 8. Israel cryeth out, my God we know thee,* and yet Israel was in a great mistake, for in the words following, verse 3. *Israel had cut off the thing that was good,* and Prov. 30. verse 12. we finde there, *A generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their iniquities.* 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great design of Satan the great deceiver, that we might be mistaken about that noble and weighty point of our Assurance of being in Christ: Is there not a power given unto him from Christ to deceive the Nations; I may say, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us then in this: If profanity kill its thousands, delusion kills ten thousands, & this delusion its twenty thousands. Lastly, Doth not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his Assurance, even that name which is given to our hearts, *Jer. 17. vers. 9. It is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and who*  
can

can know it; no doubt this may show us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and imbrace a shadow in stead of substance.

The next thing that wee have to speak to you upon this point, is to show you where these mistakes do lye, and what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; and here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1. There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand) who from sad mistakes of themselves, and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations, which wee beseech them to consider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially do meet with some flashes of light and joy which they have not been (it may bee) acquainted with before, or at least, not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* I shall not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they came to know that these are such as proceed from a saving work of the Spirit of Grace, but waving that debate, give me leave to say this much of all enjoy;



enjoyments and sensible manifestations (as  
 is the point in hand) they may bee some-  
 time a good supporter, to underprop a Chri-  
 stians assurance when it rots & falls; but never  
 a good foundation whereon he may lay the  
 first stone of that building: and therefore,  
 hee is the wiser Christian who first tryeth  
 the reality of his interest in Christ by other  
 blessed fruits of righteousness and holinesse  
 before he resteth the reality of sensible enjoy-  
 ments, how sweet or comfortable soever they  
 may seem to be. 2. Some build their assu-  
 rance upon the number and bulk of their  
 duties, without considering the frame of  
 their spirit, and the principle from which  
 they flow, they use prayer, and reading, and  
 conference, they wait upon Ordinances, and  
 are alwayes there where the means is thought  
 to bee most powerfull; and upon this they  
 take up themselves in their own arms, ble-  
 ssing themselves as that poor man, Luke 18.  
*I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all that I*  
*possesse.* But alas, they do not consider that  
 they do but build their house upon the sand,  
 which the first blast of a temptation will  
 overturn, because not only all our duties  
 when weighed in the ballance, may be found  
 light, but when put to the tryal may be found  
 empty, dead, and lifelesse things, wherein  
 the L O R D S soul can have no pleasure.  
 3. Some are mistaken in the matter of their  
 assurance, by judging themselves by the law,  
 not knowing or not regarding the spiritual  
 meaning thereof; Paul was a gallant man  
 (in his own apprehension) when hee was  
 with-

without the Law, that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the Law, he thought himself the most eminent Saint in all his Nation, and as he sheweth us, *Phil. 3.* he could compare with any of them; but when the Lord opened his eyes, we see, he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, *Rom. 7.* *He was alive without the Law*, that is, thought himself living and reigning above his sinnes; but when the commandement came, that is, when I came to his knowledge, and he saw the spirituality of it, sin revived, and he died, then hee saw how that hee had triumphed before the victory, he then saw all his sins alive, and, as it were, risen from the dead; and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate hee was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Paul's* first condition, *alive without the Law*: O how many destroy themselves with this; they think there is not a sin forbidden in all the Law of God but onely *Ten*, but alas, thou fool thou erreest in this, not knowing the Scriptures; should thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extent of the meaning of the Law, and that divine commentary which the Apostle *James* hath set forth upon it, where in hee sheweth thee, *That if thou bee guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*; and by that infallible exposition which Christ himself the blessed Law giver hath set down, *Mat. 6.* whereby hee discovereth adultery in the heart and in the eye: O atheist, thou must take up the *Ten Commands*, and subscribe guilty to them all: And let mee tell

you

you this, if yee will subscribe the Law to Christ, He will subscribe the Gospel to you; if thou wilt sincerely say, *I am guilty*, Hee will as sincerely say, *I have pardoned*; Son or daughter, be of good courage, *thy sins are forgiven thee*.

Fourthly, Some build their assistance upon the apprehension of their hatred of some particular sin, that albeit it was sometimes as their right hand, or their eye, yet now they can pluck it out, or cut it off: But O! will thou but consider, some sin may be made weak, and the soul (though not upon a right principle) brought to hate it, and to cry unto it, *get you hence*, and yet the interest of Satan may be strong in the heart.

The fifth mistake is of many who judge themselves, because they go a greater length then the former, and are kept free from all grosse outbreakeing sin; how many are there who go sleeping down to hell with this? I am no drunkard, no adulterer, no murderer, no thief nor whore; this long have I lived in the town, and they were never born that can say, I wronged them; and so they adventure their soul upon this, they never committed any grosse sin. But I beseech you bee not deceived, remember how that wretched man did speed, *Luke 18. 11. I am no extortioner, nor adulterer, nor even as this publican, &c.* poor creature that hee was, Christ giveth not a testimonial to every one who take it for themselves; and I must tell some of you, that there may bee desperate atheists without God, and without Christ in the

the world, and yet be free of grosse outbreack-  
 ing sinne: I do not think, but many of these  
 who, crucified the Lord of Glory, were  
 kept from other grosse sinne, What know-  
 est thou O man that there is more favour  
 shewed to thee, in that thou art kept from  
 some grosse sinnes, when yet thou hast a de-  
 sperately wicked heart, then is shewed to the  
 devil, when some links of his chain are ta-  
 ken in, and restraining power, keeping him  
 from his outmost bounds. God will some-  
 times restrain a hypocrite, or a heathen, as  
 it was said of *Abimelech*, and God restrained  
 him; there may be a cord put upon thy  
 jaws, when thou art far from having the  
 power of conquering grace. It may be also  
 that all that abstaining from outward out-  
 breakings, proceedeth but from outward  
 disadvantages, and not from any fear of God,  
 or respect to him, yea, not so much as from  
 the fear of any eternal punishment: Are  
 there not many amongst us. I believe it, there  
 are many, that take away shame, and Church  
 censure, or civil punishment, and other in-  
 conveniences of that sort, and set a thou-  
 sand hells before them, they would not be  
 kept back from one sinne, but would take  
 their hazard of them all: Yea, is it not want  
 of temptation, and nothing else that hinder-  
 eth many from grosse outbreackings? If Sa-  
 ran would come but with a kindled match,  
 there wanteth no more to set tongue and  
 hands and all on fire of hell, O wretched  
 soul, do but ask thy self how often thou hast  
 tempted Satan, when he would not tempt  
 thee,

thee, and how often thou hast followed a  
 temptation when it fled from thee; yea, when  
 the Lord hath hedged up thy wayes that  
 thou could not overtake thy lovers; how  
 many a long look hast thou sent after them,  
 and what lustings of thy spirit within; and  
 do ye think that heart sins are nothing; al-  
 though thou had no out-breaking; what were  
 the matter of that; if thou had not a tongue  
 thou would break the third command, and  
 curse God in thy heart, if thou had not an eye,  
 thou could commit adultery in thy heart; if  
 thou had not a hand, thou might commit  
 murder in thy heart. O therefore build not  
 thy assurance upon this, that thou hast made  
 clean the outside of the platter, when yet all  
 filthinesse is within.

The sixth false foundation upon which I  
 am sure too many build their assurance, is  
 their gifts and parts, and especially upon  
 these two, the gift of prayer, and the gift  
 of knowledge; but believe it, it is not much  
 to be a Christian in tongue, but it is much to  
 be a Christian in heart; know ye not that  
 this will cast out many, We have prophesied in  
 thy Name, and in thy name cast out devils; No  
 doubt, these had been excellent flourishers,  
 and if the tongue would have done it, they  
 had been highly advanced; but yet yee see  
 these men meet with a depart from mee,  
 know you not. Ah, think upon it, he is not  
 the best Christian that is the best Orator, Re-  
 ligion that is pure and undefiled, consisteth  
 more in the affection, then in the tongue,  
 and more in practice, then in profession. I  
 beseech

beseech you, when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consider how well yee have done, and not how well yee have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O saith one, my conscience doth not charge mee with any thing, I thank God I have a quiet mind, and nothing trouble me; but ah, poor wretch, will thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, and therefore all is at peace; a dumb conscience, and a seared conscience, is a dreadfull plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, and because they say so, the Lord shall not spare them, but all the curses in his Book shall ly upon them.

The eighth false ground, is, the approbation of other Christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised Christians, or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence all their disputings. O cursed bee the person that putteth his trust in men who are liars; O man or woman, let me assure you this, if yee had a testimoniall to present to Christ, subscribed with all the hands of every Christian that ever yee were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you, and he both, *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphasis in that word, *I know you not*, as if he had said, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

double

The

The ninth false ground, is, their diligent observing all the Ordinances, their going to Preachings, and their going to Communion, and running to and fro, pretending this godly behaviour knowledge may be increased; but know not, there are many that have sitted down at a Table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter. Are there not many that shall say unto Christ in the great Day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence, Lord, whom thou shalt say, Depart from me, I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists; of which no doubt there are many here to day: is the building of their eternall happinesse upon this, & covenant with a crosse, I never knew what it was, to have a sad day; but to thee I shall onely say, it may be thou never had a joyfull day, neither in all thy sinful pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad Divinitie to conclude, therefore I am in the way to Heaven: It may be it were better reasoning, (and though I will not say it, yet it cometh nearer truth) I had never a crosse, therefore I am going on in the way to Hell. O wilt thou but consider, what if Hee be heaping coals upon thy head, and fattning thee to the day of slaughter? What if this word be your portion? Eat, drink, and bee merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must eternally die. What are all your pleasures, and what are all your honours: and what are all your possessions? What are they all?

all? Are there not a bone cast into a dog? the Lord valgeth them not. What if they be the falling of you to the day of slaughter?

Now as to these who deny they have any interest in Christ; when indeed they have, they commonly deceive themselves, and vex their own spirits upon some of these or the like mistakes. 1. Some judge of their estate by their present frame and condition; so that if they be in an evil frame, they begin and raze the foundations; and so for such would I say, That every change of condition doth not speak a change of estate. An child of God may be in much darkness, and under much deadness; and yet a child of God still. *Psal. 58.* It was not evil to me to be as a beast before God; and yet so good then he keepeth grips, and holdeth him by the right hand. *Job* was often in a very ill frame, and yet holdeth fast his integrity; and why then should thou upon that account cast away thine.

2. Christians judge their estate by dispensations, they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a change of estate; and if Christ do not smile alwayes, we know not what it is to keep up the faith of our interest; and indeed this is a great fault among Christians, that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What though he change his dispensation, doth that speak forth a change of thy estate. Christ cannot change his voice to us, but we think he changeth his heart. Christ he cannot speak to us in the

whi  
beco  
ciou  
tere  
esta  
by  
an b  
can  
the  
it h  
liev  
Chr  
not  
ans  
they  
in th  
look  
done  
ery  
that  
selve  
migl  
one  
weep  
to C  
judg  
in Ch  
self;  
way  
put  
them  
prec  
this



whirle-wind; but we cry out, Why art thou become unto me as an enemy? Oh, shall precious Christ be thus mistaken.

The third ground of mistake about our interest in Christ, is, that we judge of our estate by what we are in our selves, and not by what wee are in Christ. When a Christian beginneth to judge and search himself, he can finde nothing in himself; but what is the matter of doubting, and therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a Believer: But O fool, can thou not look to Christ, and cry out, though in my self I be nothing, yet in him I am all: O if Christians knew to judge of themselves be what they are in Christ, and not be what they are in themselves, that with one eye they might look to themselves, and cry out, *I am undone*, and with another look to Christ, and cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me*, that with one eye they might look to themselves, and *blush*, and with another eye they might look unto Christ, and *hope*, that with one eye they might look to themselves, and *weep*, and with another eye they might look to Christ and *rejoyce*. O Christian will thou judge alway of thy self, be what thou art in Christ, and not be what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with tentations that put thee to dispute thy interest, do but send them to Christ to get an answer, and say, O precious Christ, answer this temptation, for this is Christs way with the soul, the Law  
I must

must bring us back to Christ, and Christ must send us back to the Law, and deliver us over to it, not to the condemning power of it as before, but the directing and guiding power of it as a rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be a sweet and constant travelling between Christ and the Law; when thou hast broke the Law, flie unto Christ to take away thy guilt, and when thou hast closed with Christ, come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The fourth mistake is, that Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces, more nor by the sincerity of them; some Christians, if they finde not love in such a degree, and if they finde not repentance in such a degree, immediately they begin and raze the foundations, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisie; but I must say this to thee, we should not onely weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touch-stone, for the smallest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of faith, *is alike precious faith*, with that the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistakes among Christians is this, That they compare themselves more unto the Saints, then they judge of themselves by the Word. O saith one, if I were like David, I would believe, but I am not like David, nor Job, nor Hezekiah: and therefore there is none of the Saints to which

which I should go, and if I should call, there is none to answer, and why then should I believe: I would onely say to thee whose objection that is, it is even *Dauids* objection, *Psal.* 22. 5, 6. *Our fathers trusted in thee;* O they were excellent men; But what a man am I? A *worme*, and not a *man*, and yet, he was put from that objection: and I would say this, Are yee below him: In what? I hope yee are not below *David* in necessity: Now though ye be below him in grace, if ye be not below him in necessity, yee have so much the more right to believe; for as wee said before, necessity giveth you a right, and the more necessity, the greater right to believe.

The sixth ground is, That Christians judge of their estate by Christs part of the Covenant, and not by their own, rather examining themselves by what Christ hath promised to do for them, then by what is left to them to do, which thing if it were headed, would put a close to many of our mistakes and disputings.

Having now laid out some mistakes upon either hand, the next wee would do, is to propose some considerations to presse you to guard against these mistakes, especially the first.

And the first consideration is, That mistakes about ones interest in Christ, and assurance, is a most universal and popular evil; it is not one of a day, nor two of a family, but many are mistaken in their interest in

Christ: that word, *Prov. 30. 12.* *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not cleansed from their iniquity, it is not one or two that are under this mistake, but it is a generation: And I suppose, there are many of us, we are of this tribe and generation, Matth. 7. 22.* *Hee saith, many in that day shall say unto mee, Lord, Lord, and have wee not prophesied, and yet hee shall say unto them, I know you not: Since it is so universal a mistake, I intreat you be much in the search of your selves, search your own selves: Certainly I think, if there were but within this Church one that were under this mistake, it should put us all to this, Master is it I, Master is it I; but how much more since there is a generation of mistakers, should it not be our exercise every day to cry out, is it I.*

The second consideration is, That as it is a most universal, so also it is a most irrecoverable mistake; if ye mistake about this your being in Christ, there is no making up of that mistake; if once yee passe the borders of Time with this lie in your right hand, I am in Christ, there is no hope of recovery, eternity will cut off access to make up that mistake: I intreat you go not down to your grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet Christ may say, I know you not: I believe it, if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that yee are indeed a Saint, and if all the Ministers that

that ever you spoke to should praise you in the gate, and declare you to be a son and daughter of Abraham; yet when you shall bring up your testimoniall to Heaven, and the Father shall read it, and shall ask you where is my Sons Name, if that be not there, it will certainly be rejected, and cast over the bar.

Thirdly, It is a soul destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of their immortal soul, according to that word, *Isa- 44. 20.* *A deceived heart hath led them aside, and what is the fruits of it, so that he cannot deliver his soul,* and by consequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul; I believe it, there are many that go to hell in a chariot of delusion; we know some Christ guideth to Heaven by the gates of hell, and letteth them not see life till they be in sight of hell; but it is true also; there are others whom the devil guideth to hell, by the very borders of Heaven, he maketh them believe they are dwelling in the gate of Heaven all their dayes, and yet at last they are thrust down to these habitations that are prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fourthly, If once a person be mistaken about their interest in Christ, they will have these three notable disadvantages attending upon them. 1. As long as he is under this mistake, he is without all reach of profiting by the Ordinances, for when he heareth preaching, he will apply promises, when he should apply threatnings, and upon the

other hand, apply threatenings when he should apply promises, and so that which should be his medicine, becometh poison to him. 2. As long as he is under this mistake, it maketh him that he cannot pity nor have compassion upon himself, that though he be the most suitable object of compassion, yet he knows not what it is to weep over his own ruine. 3. Readily all his graces are but delusions, all his good motions are but flashes, and all his mortification counterfeited, and all his tenderneffe is but the mother of stupidity, and therefore guard against mistakes about your interest in Christ I intreat you.

Fifthly, Consider, that mistakes about ones interest, is a most abiding and constant mistake, believe it, if once we mistake in this, it is one to a hundred if ever wee come right again: this is clear, *Jer. 8. 5. They hold fast deceit, they keep it with both their hands: And, Isa. 44. 20. Their is a lie in their right hand,* that is, they hold the lie and they keep it with all their power; I say, if once one be mistaken concerning their interest in Christ, it is hard to put them from it, yea, delusion it is such an abiding thing, that we find Christ speaketh of it, as if it would wait upon one before the judgement seat of Christ, and as if some would never quite their hope of heaven, till Christ pronounce that word, *Depart from me, I know you not*, delusion may carry us over the borders of Time, and lead us in to Eternity.

Sixthly, There is much counterfeited Religion

ligion that is in those dayes, there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is a painted tenderness; some they love shadows and pictures, and yet they do not love the very shadow of Christ, and are there not many who think they are embracing Christ, and yet are embracing a delusion and a snare.

That which thirdly we would speak to from this point, is, to give you some evidences by which yee may know if the assurance ye have of your being in Christ, be right or no: Believe it, there are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*, which the devil and their own deceitfull heart hath drawn, and Christ never gave consent to it: And I shall propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which ye may discern.

First, A real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance: this is clear, *1 Joh. 3. 3.* Every man that hath this hope in him, that is, perswaded of this that he shall come to heaven, *He will purifie himself, as he is pure:* And *2 Cor. 7. 1.* Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of the flesh, and of the Spirit. O! When a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, hee cannot but cry forth, *What have I to do anymore with idols:* When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every temptation that he meeteth with this, *I am not mine own, I am bought with a price, I cannot now dispose of my*

self: and if your assurance of going to heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils pillow sowed under your arm holes: Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness, can such a delusion at this overtake you.

Secondly, A real assurance putteth the Christian to a pressing and earnest pursuit after communion and fellowship with God: is it possible for one to be assured, and not to be saying, *he is sick of love*: this is clear Song 2. 16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; and immediately followeth, *Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether*: And it is clear, Song 7. 10, 11. *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*: and what followeth upon that, *She cometh and inviteth Christ, O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages*. O when gave ye Christ such an invitation as this, O precious Christ, let us lodge in the villages, and go down to the secret places of the field: and Psal. 63. 1. *My God, there is his assurance; and immediately followeth upon that, Early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth after thee as in a dry parched land where no water is*. There is a pressing desire after communion. But I would ask you, Are there not many here who have the hope of heaven (to their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ was never with them: I desire to say to thee, (be who thou wilt)



Be not deceived, God is not mocked, that which thou sowest, thou shalt also reap. I think there are some of us, we would let Christ live in Heaven many dayes without giving him one visit, if He would let us alone: But O if we were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often would this be our complaint when he were absent, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; or my idol hath carried me away from Him, and I know not where to find Him.*

Thirdly, Assurance of our being in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise; believe it, I think this is one of the most searching evidences of assurance: There are some Christians they will be convinced for the neglect of the duty of prayer, but for the neglect of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction; and I tell you the reason of it, prayer is a selfish grace, (so to speak) but praise it is a denying grace, prayer seeketh, but praise giveth, *Exod. 15. 2. He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation, and he is my fathers God, I will exalt him, Psal. 118. 28. He is my God, I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him:* What needeth David these repetitions, might not one serve? No saith he, I would even spend my dayes in this, *My God, my God*, there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and love committeth many sweet *batologies*: Now I say to thee, was thou ever put to the heart exercise of praise, by this assurance that thou  

I 5

hast,

hast, this is an evidence indeed, but alas, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is match'esse unto him, as is cleare, *Song. 2. 3. I sat down under his shadow*, there is faith and assurance of it, and what accompanieth that, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*: Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse, in his sweetnesse, his power, his beauty; and his usefulness is above all.

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing, the assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust: Was not *Jacob* low in his own eyes, when he cryed out, *I am lesse then the least of all thy mercies*; What? was not *David* low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto*; and was not *Paul* a low man in his own eyes, *Ephes. 3. 8. 16. I am lesse then the least of all thy Saints*, and when he cryed out, *I am the cheif of sinners*: The assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust, and cry out, *Wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips*.

Sixthly, Real assurance will put him to take much pleasure and delight in the going about of duties: that word, *Psal. 40. 8. My God*, saith he, that is his assurance, and presently he subjoyneth, *I delight to do thy will*, O Lord, this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, *Psal.*

*Psal. 119. 115. Depart from me evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God; I believe it, the love of Christ when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty: and therefore this proud transporting assurance in these dayes, that setteth men above all duties and Ordinances, and maketh them count the Gospel as well as the Law, but beggerly rudiments, and cry out to their neighbours, Stand aback, for I am holier then thou, must needs be a delusion.*

Lastly, There are these three properties of a real assurance, it is a begotten assurance, it is a living assurance, and it is a constraining assurance. The first two properties of it are set down in that, 1 Pet. 1. 2. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope; Who began that assurance in thee? I suppose some have assurance, and it was begotten without travel; but if Christ be not the father of thy assurance, it will vanish and passe away. And, secondly, it must be a living assurance, some hearts are dead as a stone, and yet they say they have the hope of heaven. And thirdly, it must be a constraining assurance, it will put the Christian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the most pleasant Isaac that we have, if he commandeth us to sacrifice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, and be willing to offer it up.*

Now after all these evidences, I desire to have a report from you concerning your estate; What think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ, or no; I suppose, if Christ should  
come

come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ, wee would have a thin assembly: I confesse, I wonder, that that word doth not make us to walk with sadnesse, *Many are called, but few are chosen*: Now I ask this question at you all, as in the sight of God, and as ye will one day answer unto him that will be your Judge; What think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ*: I suppose this, if I were to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, *are ye, and ye in Christ*, O! I doubt much if there should be many negative answers within the doors, we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet it kepted it self, that is too like a delusion, the faith that never knew what it was to put thee to real seeking of Christ, is too like a delusion. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel invitations that is in all the Scripture, *Lam. 3. 34. Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord*: When thou hast searched, come away, for I tell thee this, there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity, and I hope there is none of you, but ye have enough of this, and know it, if ye will  
 not

not come to Christ, hee will compell you to come, but it shall not be for your advantage to stay away, till ye be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *Come away*; O persons that are in Christ, *Come away*; we must preach that word, *Come away*, unto you, as long as ye are here, till ye come and be fixed as a pillar in the house of God, and go no more out, O study to be near him: O Christian didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O when shall I have immediate imbraces of blessed Christ: When shall there be nothing between my heart and Him? till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is alway something between Him and us, till we be above the clouds: O these immediate soul infoldings and imbracings of Christ: Are ye never sending a messenger to heaven, desiring a passe to go away that ye may enjoy them, and are ye not longing for the day, when the waters of Jordan shall divide themselves, and the ransomed of the Lord shall passe thorow: Now let us sing praises to our King, sing praises, for he hath gone up with a shout, and shall come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.

---

SER.

## SERMON IX.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

**I** Think ere long, there are many that passeth under the notion of Professors, that the veriest atheist when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Are thou also become like unto one of us*; Are there not many here that are in a golden dream, and in a fools paradise, that dream they eat, and behold, when they awake, they shall be hungry; therefore I think it is incumbent upon us, to search and examine our state, and condition; profanity hath slain its thousands, but delusion and presumption hath slain their tenthousands. It was an ancient complaint of Christ, *Luk. 12. 57. And why even of your selves judge ye not what is right*; I am persuaded of this, there are many decreets of peace past upon earth, that are never ratified in heaven, there are many that cry out, *The bitterness of death is past*, whom yet God by the sword of his Justice, shall hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the last

last occasion, that we spake upon these words there were six things we intended to speak from them, of the first three we have spoken.

That which we intended to speak to at this time, is, that there is much soul advantage and spiritual gain, that doth redound to the Christian, by the distinct perswasion of his interest in Christ; this we gathered from Paul's doubling the command of searching and trying themselves, as if he had said, it is a businesse that will be so much for your advantage, that it is incumbent for you to search and try diligently: And for further clearing of the point, I shall only give these three places, *Rev. 2. 17. I will give unto them a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knoweth, but he that hath received it: By the new name, and the white stone, is understood assurance, and the intimation of it to the soul: This indeed is such a mercy, that I defy any to make language of it, no man knoweth it, much lesse can he expresse it, but he that is the professor of it, and that place, Isa. 62. 2, 3. I will give unto them a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name: O what a name must that be which the mouth of the Lord will name: I think, what he giveth, must be one of the noblest names that ever was given, all the stiles and titles under heaven cannot equal it. And, thirdly, we see David in the 18. Psal. found much sweetness and advantage in this, when nine times he hath that word,*  
*my,*

*my: My strength, my rock, my fortresse and my deliverer, my strength and my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower, O David, what needeth all these Mys, David would answer us, O! he is so sweet in himself, but O! much sweeter to me, when I put to that possessive note, My.*

Now to speak more particularly to these advantages of assurance, The first is, That a person that is assured of his interest in Christ, he is much in desiring communion with Christ: *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth; (there is his assurance) where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon, there is desire of communion, and Song 7. 10, 11. My beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me, there is her assurance, and immediately followeth, Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, let us lodge in the villages, there her desire of communion, Song 2. 16, 17. My beloved is mine, and I am his, and what followeth upon that, He feedeth among the lillies, untill the day break, and the shadows flie away, Turn my beloved, and be as a roe, or a wilde hart upon the mountains of Bether, that is in short, let me have sweet correspondency and fellowship with thee, till the day of Eternity shall come: I think the desires of an assured Christian, they are like the grave, the cry continually, Give, give, and they never say, it is enough: What is the reason, ye seek so little after fellowship with Christ, it is even this, ye are not perswaded of your interest in him; believe*



lieve it, if once ye had attained to this blest length, as to cry out, *Christ is mine*, it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at such a distance with him as ye do for the most part: O but assurance maketh absence from Christ an unsupportable burden, *Psal. 22. 1. My God, my God*, there is assurance, and immediately followeth his complaint, *Why hidest thou thyself from me*, *Song 3. 1, 2, 3.* that word, *Him whom my soul loveth*, made her to weep so much under absence from Christ, and *Joh. 20. 13.* when the Angels ask the question at *Mary*, *Women why weepest thou?* I think she thought it a needlesse question, and she tells the cause of it, *They have taken away my Lord*: I think her heart was at her mouth when shee pronounced these two words, *My Lord*, she spake them with a great deal of emphasis and force, could ye resent absence with Christ so little, if ye were assured he were yours. I confesse, it is no wonder when persons losse that which is not their own, that they weep not much for the losse of it; but O! to losse that which is our own, it maketh it a crosse and a burden to us.

Secondly, It maketh the soul to have a high and matchles esteem of precious Christ, *Song 5. 10. My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand*: O saith the Spouse, I never saw his like, and I shall never see his like again; there is much in that *My*; interest maketh her look upon Christ with another eye nor she would have done, Strangers

strangers look upon him but as a tree planted on the sand, 1 Pet. 2. 7. To you that believe Christ is precious, not to every one: And Song 2. 2. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight*, the reason is, interest in the words going before, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*; yea, assurance will make every thing in Christ exceeding pleasant to the soul: as is clear, Song 5. 16. *My beloved is altogether lovely*, or, *hee is all desires*. I tell you what assurance will do, it will make Christs person pleasant and precious to the soul, it will make Christs Natures pleasant to the soul, it will make Christs Offices pleasant to the soul, it will make Christs Promises pleasant to the soul, it will make Threatnings pleasant to the soul, it will make the smell of Christs Garments pleasant to the soul, and it will make the kisses of His Mouth pleasant to the soul: O saith the assured Christian, there is nothing of Christ but it is most pleasant, and is all desires; His Threatnings are pleasant, they are the wounds of a friend, and His kisses are pleasant, they are better then wine, His Name it is pleasant, it is as precious ointment powred, forth, His smellings are most delightful, whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars: O to imbrace a married Christ, how pleasant is it to the soul; What maketh you to have so low thoughts of Christ? even this, the want of assurance that Hee is your Husband.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Assurance will make the Christian patiently to submit to every crosse and sad dispensation he meeteth with: this is clear, *Heb. 10. 34. They took with joy the spoiling of their goods, and what made them do so, They hoped for a better inheritance, and a more induring substance: I tell you, assurance, it will answer all crosses with this, Christ is mine; when they are afflicted, assurance will lift up its face, and cry out, Christ is mine, and when they are reproached, they will comfort themselves with this, Christ is mine, I can put on the Lord Jesus.*

Fourthly, Assurance will keep you from apostacy and defection from Christ, *2 Pet. 1. 10. Make your calling and election sure, and if ye do this (saith he) ye shall never fall; Heb. 3. 11. 12. It is there set down as a fruit of the evil heart of misbelief, it maketh us depart from the living God, but on the contrary, assurance knitteth the soul to Christ by a threefold cord, which is not easily broken. Believe it, the assured Christian can cry out with much confidence of faith, My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved; the assured Christian can cry out with much chearfulness: In God will I praise his word, in God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me; yea, he can sweetly sing in the very mouth of danger, The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid; Psal. 27. 1.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Assurance keepeth all the graces of the spirit green and flourishing, it is as a refreshing dew upon our branches, which maketh every grace sweetly to blossom in its season. 1. It stirreth up the exercise of love: O how vigorous are the actings of love, when a Christian can cry out, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, Song 1. 13. *My beloved*, there is her assurance, *He is a bundle of myrrhe, and shall lye all night between my breasts*, that is, as long as time shall last, I shall never have Christ out of my my heart, there is love, 1 Joh. 4. 19. *We loved him, because he loved us first*; our hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth love, the sense of his love to us, putteth our hearts into a heavenly flame towards him again. 2. Assurance keepeth up the exercise of prayer, it is the assured Christian that can pray best, and to best advantage, and in these three things especially, is prayer helped by assurance. First, It helpeth in the point of boldnesse: O but the assured Christian can go boldly to the Throne of Grace, *Crying Abba father, and my Lord and my God*. Secondly, It helpeeth our diligence in prayer, Psal. 63 1. *O my God, there is assurance, early will I seek thee*, there is his diligence as the fruit thereof. Thirdly, It helpeth the fervency of prayer, as in that same place, *my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*, there is his fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 3. Assurance keepeeth in exercise and life, the grace of mortification:

as is clear by comparing, 2 Cor. 4. vers. last, with 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We look not after the things that are seen :* O Paul, what aileth you, may ye not take a look of the world, O saith Paul, and would ye know the ground of it, *Wee know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternally in the heavens :* my house and my treasure is in heaven, I must have my heart there, and my eyes also : Would yee know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually with you. And 4. It keepeth in exercise the grace of humility ; there is nothing will keep a Christian so humble as assurance, Gal. 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in mee,* Eph. 3. 8. *there hee is all in exalting grace, and debasing himself :* It is the misbeliever and discouraged person that dwelleth nearest pride ; Believe it, misbelief is big with childe of pride and apostacy, these are the two children which that fruitfull mother will bring forth. And, 5. It will help the grace of Repentance : Would yee know what would make the Christian to repent, it is even this, to take Christ in our arms and call him ours, Zech. 12. 10. *They shall look unto him, that is, their faith, and and they shall mourn as one mourneth for his only Son :* I think it is known by experience, the soul never weeps more tenderly under the conviction of sin, then when he hath Christ in his arms, and can see, *Hee*

*is mine*: O how sweetly doth they then complain, there is not a sight of Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it breaketh all their heart in pieces, and it is as a sword piercing into the bones, when they cry out, O what a fool was I to offend such a precious One, in whom I had so much interest; Was it not sense of interest that made *Mary wash* the feet of Christ with her tears. Lastly, It will keep in exercise the grace of Joy, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. It is faith which maketh one to *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*: Would yee know why your graces are withered? would ye know why all the pleasant plants of God within your soul are decayed? It is this, ye live without sight of your interest in Christ, believe it, (if so I may speak) assurance will be a watering to your graces every morning, and refresh them every hour, it being as a channel through which divine influence is conveighed to the increase of grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh in to the Christian by assurance of his interest in Christ, is, That it maketh death exceeding pleasant and comfortable to the soul; what maketh death *the king of terrors*, and what maketh it so unto us? Is it not this, wee go to heaven under a cloud: the assured Christian can take death in his arms, and cry out, *welcome, O friend*: the assured Christian, when he seeth the chariots his father sends for him, doth with old *Jacob* rejoyce, and

*Psal.*

*Psal 23. When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: What brought you that length, David? I tell you why, saith he, for God is with me, ver. 4. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company: It is the assured Christian that can cry out, Why should I fear death, should I not laugh at destruction: I think indeed, the assured Christian needeth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funerall of all his sorrows: and is not the day of death his coronation day, his marriage day, the day of his triumph, and of his entering into rest, and why then should he fear it.*

The seventh advantage is, That a Christian being in the state of assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that hee meets with from God: the assured Christian looketh upon every mercy as a wonder; it is the assured Christian that cryeth out, *I am lesse then the least of all thy mercies*: there is not a mercy he meets with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if hee can read this on it, that it came from my Husband, and from my Father, it will be better to him then the sweetest wine.

Lastly, Assurance doth exceedingly help us to chearfulnesse in obedience: O that is a remarkable connexion that *Paul* hath, *Act. 27. 23. The Lord whose I am, and whom I serve*: That passage also, *2 Cor. 5. 14. is very observable, The love of Christ constrained us, &c. Why art thou so painfull a Minister Paul?*

*Paul? Why? Knowest thou no man after the flesh, are not led by carnal interests, nor affections, art so busie and diligent as all the world counteth thee mad? Why? (saith hee) love will not let me rest if I would be lazic or carnal, or fold my hands to sleep: the love of Christ doth alwayes sound that in my ears, that I was dead, and he hath died for me, that henceforth I should not live unto my self, but to Him who died for me: Now to him who is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive for evermore, Wee give praise.*

28 OCT 62

---

**F I N I S.**

---



er the  
or af-  
l the  
saith  
ld be  
rep :  
that  
died  
e un-  
me :  
who  
Wce